

BRICS: THE ERA OF THE GLOBAL SOUTH





BRICS: the Era of the Global South

2024

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Introduction

The Russian BRICS presidency in 2024 is held under the motto “Strengthening Multilateralism for Equitable Global Development and Security.” It seeks to promote all aspects of the BRICS partnership in three key areas: politics and security, economy and finance, culture and humanitarian contacts.

“BRICS is attracting an ever increasing number of supporters and like-minded countries that share its underlying principles, namely, sovereign equality, respect for the chosen path of development, mutual consideration of interests, openness, consensus, the aspiration to form a multipolar international order and a fair global financial and trade system and pursuit of collective solutions to top challenges of our time,” Russian President Vladimir Putin said in an address on the start of Russia’s BRICS chairmanship.

BRICS is an interstate association comprised of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the UAE joined BRICS on January 1, 2024. The host of the first meeting on October 22-24, 2024 in its new, expanded format is the City of Kazan, Russia.

The idea of founding such an association was born long ago. Back in December 1998 then-Prime Minister of Russia Evgeniy Primakov during an official visit to New Delhi proposed to form a strategic triangle between Russia, India and China (RIC). Four years later in 2002 the first meeting of foreign ministers in the RIC format was held during UN General Assembly. RIC served later as the bias for creating BRIC and BRICS.

The very first meeting in the BRIC format was held in 2006 and was attended by the ministers of foreign affairs of Russia, Brazil and China and the minister of defense of India. With the accession of South Africa in 2011 the abbreviation BRICS was established as the name of the association.

The current share of the BRICS states accounts for more than 35% of global GDP and almost half of the world’s population. The association’s influence continues to grow, over 30 states have expressed their aspiration to join the alliance.

The expansion of BRICS provides its member states with opportunities for mutually beneficial cooperation in order to further develop national economies and form a multipolar system of international relations.

BRICS continues to play a key role in forming a multipolar world order and implementing of de-dollarization policies.

In total, over 200 political, economic and social events of different levels were held as part of the Russian BRICS presidency in 2024. Brazil will take over the BRICS presidency in 2025.

New Eastern Outlook

Sergey Ryabkov: “We are not after sensationalism, we are focused on practical results”

The BRICS summit in Kazan is only a few weeks away. Should we expect the expansion of the alliance? What criteria should partner countries meet? How is the ‘collective West’ reacting to BRICS strengthening its position on the world stage? Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Russian Sherpa for BRICS Sergey RYABKOV answered these questions.



– *Sergey Alexeyevich, last year in August BRICS doubled in size, an unprecedented case internationally. How is the process of integrating new members going?*

– It won't be an exaggeration to call the decision taken at the summit in Johannesburg in 2023 on the expansion of BRICS historic. As of January 1, 2024, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates joined BRICS.

Each of the new members has a rich history and culture, vast economic potential and plays a significant role not only in their region, but also in the international arena. They all share the fundamental values of BRICS, including the spirit of solidarity, equality, mutual respect, openness, inclusiveness and consensus. In this sense, their involvement in the association certainly increases the profile of BRICS in world affairs and its

ability to make a decisive contribution to building a more democratic and fair system of international relations that meets the interests of the World Majority.

Ensuring the consolidation of partnership in the expanded association and the seamless integration of new members into the entire architecture of the BRICS strategic partnership is one of the priorities of our BRICS presidency this year, and we have made significant progress on this path. From the first months of their membership the new members have been actively involved in the work, demonstrate a constructive focus on deepening practical cooperation and propose their own very interesting initiatives.

– During the first meeting of BRICS Sherpas and Sous-Sherpas of the Russian presidency, you stated that “the expansion of BRICS will help build a new, fair world order.” How would you describe the reaction of the ‘collective West’ to this process?

– The world is consistently and irreversibly moving towards multipolarity. The world order built on the hegemony of the Western minority is gradually being replaced by a system with multiple poles and civilizational platforms.

Multilateral structures are coming to the fore, where interaction is based on the principles of equality, openness and mutual respect, and decisions are made following the results of comprehensive discussions on the basis of consensus.

And BRICS is one of them. The association plays a role of an important institution of multilateral cooperation, which does not seek to weaken anyone or take anyone’s place, but is aimed at creating, forming and maintaining favourable conditions for steady growth, enhancing the socio-economic, innovative and human potential of its member-states, and support in solving pressing problems of developing countries and emerging markets, as well as increasing their representation in the system of global governance.

Naturally, the “collective West” identifies the activities of BRICS, which embodies a more equitable approach to the decision-making on the global agenda with a new polycentric world order, which is a cause of hostility and rejection for them. But our absolute priority is to develop stable ties with the states of the World Majority, which are showing growing interest in deepening cooperation with BRICS.

– Currently, more than 30 countries have expressed their desire to join the association. The Johannesburg summit aimed to work out the categories of partner states and make an approximate list. Have the main criteria, which partner states must meet, been chosen yet?

– Following last year’s meeting of BRICS leaders in South Africa, the foreign ministers were tasked with formulating the modality of a new category of ‘partner states’ and making a list of potential candidates. This work is in its final stage. We expect to present its results this October at the BRICS summit in Kazan.

Of course, we are considering as candidates like-minded states committed to the BRICS values, including promoting the formation of a democratic multipolar world, strengthening global security and stability, respecting the principles of the UN Charter and international law, rejecting unilateral coercive measures, reforming the multilateral architecture of global governance so that the voice of the Global South and East will be louder and will be heard.

– Today the focus is on the category of partner states; does this mean that further BRICS expansion is not planned in the near future? What are the boundaries of the association’s expansion?

– Considering the twofold expansion of BRICS this year, it is probably premature to talk about a new wave. We cannot forget about the need to maintain the achieved level of practical cooperation in the BRICS format, to ensure high-quality practical benefits from the already established mechanisms. However, we cannot ignore the growing interest of the states of the Global South and East in strengthening contacts with BRICS. At the moment, more than thirty states have expressed such a desire in one form or another. The doors of the association remain open to all those who are interested in a trusting and equal dialogue and share the values of BRICS.

As the president of the association this year, we are trying to build a balance between expansion and efficiency. In addition to working on the category of partner countries, we involve like-minded countries in cooperation in various BRICS formats, wherever it is possible and there is demand. Of course, we work in close contact and consultation with our partners in the association.

Since the beginning of the year, we have already held a number of meetings with the invitation of like-minded countries. In this context, I would like to note the meeting of foreign ministers (Nizhny Novgorod, June 10-11, 2024), the BRICS Interparty Forum (Vladivostok, June 18-19), the Parliamentary Forum (St. Petersburg, July 11-12), the International Municipal Forum (Moscow, August 27-28). Athletes from 82 countries took part in the BRICS Games held in Kazan on June 12-13.

An expanded session with partners from Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Latin America and the Eurasia is scheduled for the XVI BRICS Summit in Kazan on October 22-24.

– The share of BRICS countries in global GDP (by purchasing power parity, PPP) increased by 0.6% in 2023, reaching a record high of 35.7%. At the same time, the economies of the G7 countries decreased by 0.4%, reaching 29%. In your opinion, how will these figures change this year?

– As you have noted, the contribution of BRICS in the global economy is substantial. With the expansion of the association this year its share in global GDP has naturally become even more significant.

In its new, expanded setup, BRICS covers over 30% of the world's landmass, encompasses 45% of the global population (3.6 billion people). If one considers the IMF statistics, then by the end of 2024 the share of BRICS countries in global GDP (by PPP) will exceed 36% with a growth rate of 4.6%, which is almost 1.4% higher than the global average (3.2%), not to mention that of the G7 (1.7%). The BRICS nations account for over 40% of the total volume of oil production and around a quarter of global exports of goods.

The resource, innovative-technological and human potential of the BRICS states is a good foundation for strengthening the positions of the association's members in the global economy and the basis for increasing their role in the system of global governance. This reflects the general trend of business activity shifting towards new centers of economic influence emerging in Asia, Africa, Latin America and other regions in the world.

– It's too early to talk about a single BRICS currency today. The member states should focus on forming the conditions for the widespread use of national currencies in mutual payments. The BRICS countries are also working on creating alternative mechanisms to transfer financial information. Which steps are being taken in this regard?

– De-dollarization is becoming an objective global trend. The BRICS countries and a number of other states are seeking to decrease their dependence on the US dollar, which is caused by growing distrust of the reliability of the Western financial system, which is increasingly being used by Washington and its European satellites more and more as an instrument of blackmail and imposing political will.

Creating an independent payment and settlement infrastructure resistant to the pressure sanctions is a key element in strengthening the autonomy and financial sovereignty of BRICS countries. In this regard, during the BRICS summit in Johannesburg finance ministers and central bank governors of the BRICS states were instructed to work out

issues pertaining to the use of national currencies, payment instruments and platforms in mutual trade transactions. Relevant agencies are actively engaged in the issue of linking the financial markets of the BRICS countries and the introduction of new mutual settlement mechanisms.

For example, a draft multilateral platform for cross-border payments for equal access of all BRICS countries to available financial instruments with a high level of protection of transmitted financial messages and minimal costs, including using innovative tools, has been submitted to partners for consideration.

– The BRICS summit in October will attract global attention. Which countries have been invited to the summit? Should we expect any critical decisions to be made?

– We have invited the leaders of more than 30 countries to participate: the BRICS state leaders, the partners in the CIS, Africa, Asia and Latin America, as well as heads of the secretariats of regional and international integrations (including, of course, the Eurasian Economic Union, the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization). I will not mention individual states. Speaking about specifics of a summit level event is, in our practice, for obvious reasons the prerogative of the Administration of the President of the Russian Federation.

Any BRICS summit is a certain milestone in the development of the association and the interaction of the entire Global South and East, increasing its voice in the global governance system, which in itself is an important contribution to forming a multipolar world order. We are not after sensations; we are seeking practical results. We are working hard to strengthen and deepen our strategic partnership in all areas, including politics and security, economics and finance and humanitarian dimension, and to find solutions to relevant issues on the international agenda.

– Sergey Alexeyevich, we thank you for your honest and sincere dialogue and wish you fruitful work for the good of our country. We are looking forward to the BRICS summit in Kazan.

Interview conducted by Yulia Novitskaya, writer, journalist, the New Eastern Outlook correspondent

Valery Fadeyev: “It is obvious that Western civilization is completing its development cycle”

There are only a few days left before the beginning of the BRICS summit in Kazan. Therefore, it is absolutely natural that BRICS became the central topic of our conversation with the adviser to the President of the Russian Federation, Chairman of the Presidential Council for the Development of Civil Society and Human Rights Valery FADEYEV.



We talked about the need to develop criteria for evaluating countries different from existing Western ones (according to which most states today do not want to be evaluated) and raised the issue of expanding the professional army in our country, as well as trying to figure out what should be the basis for the Declaration of Civil Society, which will be presented in Kazan.

Read about this and much else in our exclusive interview.

– Valery Aleksandrovich, currently public figures from the BRICS countries are developing a Declaration of Civil Society, which will be presented to the leaders of member countries of the association in October at the summit in Kazan. In your opinion, what should constitute its foundation?

– We see how cynically and consistently the West moves away from the principles of humanism laid down centuries ago. It is obvious that Western civilization is completing its development cycle. It has given mankind tremendous achievements, but now we are seeing clear signs of the disintegration of Western civilization. Even 70 years ago, the great Russian-American sociologist Pitirim Sorokin foresaw such a finale. And his forecast coincides (in many details) with what is happening today: the degeneration of capitalism, the cult of consumption and pleasure, low culture. Plus digitalisation with its serious threats and risks...

Today, BRICS, in my opinion, is the very union of different civilizations that could bring back, renew the meaning of the values that were laid down at the creation of the United Nations. We are talking about universal values: peace, security, justice and other basic concepts.

Now it is very important to answer the question of how to form a new view of the unity of countries of the world that meets modern conditions. Because without unity, without universal values, it will be impossible to overcome the split and create a more just and safer world.

– Today it is already clear to many that most countries do not want to be evaluated according to Western criteria. In one of the interviews, you said that you saw how the evaluations given by Western organizations to some countries do not correspond to the economic growth of these countries. Maybe it's time to develop your own assessment criteria, for example, within the framework of BRICS?

– I raised this issue at the meeting of the President of the Russian Federation with the Council of Human Rights in December 2023. The network of Western non-governmental organizations plays a significant role in interfering in the internal affairs of many states. Their number is large, many of them are engaged. Especially those who just give countries these ratings of freedom, democracy and so on. Some political decisions are made based on these ratings, including military interventions, as was the case with Libya.

No political principles and models should interfere with the development of countries and peoples. It is necessary to create a counterweight: non-profit analytical organizations greenlighted, for example, within the framework of BRICS.

They would conduct objective studies on human rights indifferent countries without excluding social rights as they do in the West. Without lining up countries one behind the other, in a ranking system where the Western one is the standard. I would like to

note that the methods should be accepted by all participants and names of the experts should not be ‘classified’.

– Valery Aleksandrovich, you head the Presidential Council of the Russian Federation for the Development of Civil Society and Human Rights. How closely do you interact with the BRICS member countries in this area?

–This year we have been meeting and discussing our cooperation at various venues in different cities in Russia. We are currently discussing foundation of a BRICS humanitarian centre at the Russian State University for the Humanities. In the near future we will prepare a concept for the development of the centre. We need to provide a model for others in this direction.

Our Council has also previously made proposals to create an international court of justice with BRICS, SCO and CSTO countries. Currently, the only working tool remains the International Court of Justice of the United Nations, which rightly found that Russia’s actions did not violate the Convention on Terrorism and refused to recognize the Donetsk People’s Republic and the Luhansk People’s Republic as terrorist organizations. Unfortunately, the ECHR and other international courts have long discredited themselves and only broadcast the will of the West.

– At the IX BRICS Civil Forum, held in Moscow in early July, you once again made a proposal to create a common educational space for the BRICS countries. What should it be and how, in your opinion, can it help in integrating our countries?

– This common, albeit initially small, educational space for all BRICS countries could include the best examples, examples of the peaks of literature, poetry and fine art of these states. The more educated a person is and the broader his worldview, the better he feels and understands the values of other peoples and the more he is ready to interact with them.

What foreign literature is studied in our schools? European and American. It is necessary to know it, but there is great medieval Arabic poetry (when I talk about it with various representatives of Arab countries, I am warmly supported), the heritage of China, India and Latin American countries. The Universal State Exam codifier for literature includes mainly Soviet and Russian poets, there are Western European authors, but there are no references to Eastern ones.

I have previously called on the BRICS member countries to offer the works of their outstanding artists for study in schools and this work has already begun.

– Last year, following the results of the scientific and practical conference “Army and society. Mental Security Strategy” during the Army 2023 forum, you stated that, in the context of confrontation with the West, it is necessary to discuss with society the increase in the professional army in the Russian Federation. Is this necessary, among other things, to preserve our sovereignty, to resist external interference, one of the tools of which is the ideology of human rights?

– Yes, I have already said that it is necessary to spend as much on defence as is required. Currently we spend more than 8% of GDP on defence, previously it was 3%. In the USSR, defence spending reached 13%. Skeptics will say: Why, you want guns instead of butter again! But if there are no guns, there will be no butter.

Interview conducted by Yulia Novitskaya, writer, journalist, the New Eastern Outlook correspondent

Kazem Jalali: “The meeting between Mr. Pezeshkian and Mr. Putin marks a new level of strengthening relations”

It is expected that the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Masoud Pezeshkian will visit the Russian Federation in October to take part in the BRICS summit in Kazan. It will be his first visit to Russia as president. During this visit he will meet and talk with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

In anticipation of this historic event, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Russia Kazem JALALI gave an exclusive interview to the New Eastern Outlook.



– Mr. Ambassador, the newly-elected President of Iran Masoud Pezeshkian has called Russia a friend and said that Russia is a valuable strategic ally of your country. Many political scientists are saying that both Russia and Iran will be able to overcome the growing pressure of sanctions. In your opinion, to what degree can joint projects, which are realized in such difficult conditions, bring Moscow and Tehran closer?

– As a result of the recent presidential elections in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Masoud Pezeshkian became the new president. However, a change in the Government does not equate to a change in our foreign policy. The foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran is based on principles, the most important of which is development of cooperation and strengthening relations with neighbors and countries of the region – countries that helped us during harsh times, and the Supreme Leader highlighted this at Mr. Pezeshkian’s inauguration ceremony. Mr. Pezeshkian and our new Foreign Minister emphasize exactly this policy. In this context, the Russian Federation is our old friend and one of our neighbouring countries and expanding relations with Russia is a priority for us.

It’s true that both our countries are under unilateral and illegal sanctions from the U.S. and European countries, but the sanctions do not have such significance as they once had. In reality sanctions are an illegal weapon of the West against sovereign countries. The West has been using this weapon so often that it has lost its previous influence. After four decades of sanctions, of which the last 20 years have been particularly difficult, the Islamic Republic of Iran has solved this problem and has found its own way of development, freeing itself from their influence.

We believe that Russia will also overcome this problem and that the days will come when the Western restrictive measures against Russia will have no effect. The key to success lies in relying on internal capabilities, as well as on the assistance of friendly countries. In reality withstanding sanctions is one of the components of building a fair world and overcoming Western unilateralism on the path to multilateralism. We are up ahead on this path. If you compare today’s world with the past two decades regarding the U.S. and U.S.-related international institutions from the point of view of de-dollarization and Western globalization, then you will see a gradual, but a very important change. The day when Western sanctions will become ineffective is near, and this process is irreversible.

We in the Government of Mr. Pezeshkian will continue on this path even more powerfully than previously. It has been decided that the newly-elected President will visit the Russian Federation in October of this year to participate in the BRICS summit in Kazan. During this visit, the President of Iran will meet with Mr. Putin. We are confident that this meeting will open a new stage in raising the level of cooperation between our countries and promoting it.

– During the recent visit of the Secretary of the Russian Security Council, Sergey Shoigu, to Tehran and his meeting with Iran’s top officials it was declared that in the end of July Moscow and Tehran completed preparations for a comprehensive strategic partnership agreement. The document is planned to be signed at the Kazan

BRICS summit. Do you expect qualitative changes in the development of relations between our countries?

– As you know, our new president, Mr. Pezeshkian, called the development of relations with Russia as a strategic partner one of the priorities of the Islamic Republic's foreign policy. He also named Russia as one of the countries which stood by and supported the people of Iran during difficult times, once again mentioning the necessity to develop and strengthen these relations. Thus, our common approach within the cooperation between Iran and Russia may be the best strategy in building relations with some Western countries, including the U.S., for, amongst other things, solving global problems and forming a fair and multipolar world order, increasing the levels of stability and international security, as well as strengthening peace and justice.

You have mentioned that the document will be signed in Kazan, but such a decision is not yet final; the Russian side both during a meeting with me and at the meeting between the Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, Mr. Ahmadian, and the Russian President, Mr. Putin, has underlined that this extensive agreement should be signed during a bilateral visit.

– This year the Islamic Republic of Iran is celebrating its 45th anniversary. Today the economy of your country is ranked the 17th in the world, Iran continues to have importance in the region and in global politics and its influence on regional and international relations is significant. What are the main challenges it faces?

– It goes without saying that the Western sanctions against Iran and Russia are an instrument of economic pressure. In principle, the countries of the ‘almighty system’ created such international institutions with exactly this goal and intention. Iran and Russia understand very well that even with a relative improvement of their relations with the West, the sanctions will not be lifted. One of the ways of counteracting sanctions is developing one’s own production capacity and stimulating the national economy. Such an important task is impossible without support from the people and the country’s elite.

We should also share these mechanisms with friendly and likeminded countries to achieve synergy and alleviate the pressure of sanctions as soon as possible.

Considering this approach, there are very important projects in Iranian-Russian relations today, the commissioning of which we see one after another. For example, in financial and banking cooperation, in industry, science, energy and so forth. Gradually and at the right time, we will inform the media about each of these projects.

– During a recent telephone conversation, Presidents Vladimir Putin and Masoud Pezeshkian agreed to further coordinate the actions of Russia and Iran on international platforms, including BRICS, of which Iran became a member this year. What does Iran expect from the BRICS membership and how does it intend to work with new partners in a strategic and long-term partnership?

– Focusing on the Asian region and taking an active initiative in partnership with beneficial regional coalitions such as BRICS, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Eurasian Economic Union is the foreign policy strategy of the Islamic Republic of Iran that will remain sustainable even with a change in government.

The new government is pursuing a comprehensive, active and effective foreign policy. Mr. Pezeshkian's government foreign policy seeks to create a balance in relations with all countries on the basis of national interests, economic development and the pursuit of global and regional peace and security.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has always advocated for forming a just world, free from the dominance of one country in the world, and the ideals that BRICS strives for. Therefore, we see a great commonality of the goals and approaches of the BRICS countries with the policy of our republic.

Over the past years, Iran has carried out large-scale cooperation with all BRICS states, especially with the old members of the association. Everyone knows the level of Iranian-Russian relations. We likewise signed a long-term cooperation agreement with the People's Republic of China. The Republic of India is one of our important partners in such areas as trade, energy and transport and there are deep cultural ties between the two countries. South Africa and Brazil are also among Iran's most important partners in Africa and South America. From this point of view, our participation in BRICS will strengthen and accelerate existing cooperation and help find new areas for interaction within the framework of the large and diverse group of the BRICS countries.

Since the very beginning of joining BRICS, the Islamic Republic of Iran has been an active partner in all areas of the association's interests and this partnership will continue. Cooperation within the framework of BRICS in the scientific and technological fields has contributed to significant progress in knowledge-intensive and industrial fields. Iran can become a link connecting important BRICS countries with each other. Strengthening the North-South international transport corridor will connect the BRICS countries much more easily than before.

Monetary and financial cooperation to weaken the influence and dominance of the U.S. in the global financial system is a subject of attention for both Iran and other BRICS countries.

The BRICS states have exceptional potential in the field of tourism and this area can also become an important aspect of cooperation between them.

– Today the whole world is anxiously following the development of the Iranian-Israeli confrontation. The Iranian leadership has questioned the existence of an ‘Israeli regime’ in the event of a new strike by the Jewish state on the territory of the republic. Is the era of strategic patience over? How can the situation be prevented from escalating further?

– Iran’s strategic patience should be considered in conjunction with the concept of deterrence. In the sense that if the Islamic Republic of Iran refrains from expanding the theatre of military operations in the region, which entered a new stage with the barbaric aggression of the Zionist regime in the Gaza Strip in October, 2023, then such abstinence and/or policy of strategic patience should not mean ignoring the doctrine of containment of the Islamic Republic of Iran. This is a question that must be linked with a crushing response as part of the combined attacks on Zionist military targets in the occupied territories and in response to the attack on the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Damascus.

Thus, while adhering to the concept of strategic patience and taking into account the policy of deterrence, the Islamic Republic of Iran will at its own discretion, at the right time and in the right place respond to any actions that violate the sovereignty or territorial integrity of our state by any player.

To prevent the escalation and deterioration of the situation in the region, it is necessary to recall the basic responsibilities of the United Nations Security Council to preserve peace and ensure international security, as well as the reaction of all members of the world community to the violation by the Israeli regime of the norms and rules of international law and to emphasise that preventing an escalation of the crisis and creating stability is the responsibility and task for all states and international organisations. All countries, as members of the world community, without any policy and/or pressure from the U.S. and some of its allies, must fulfil their inalienable obligations regarding the continuous crimes of the Zionists, including war crimes and genocide in occupied Palestine.

– You have recently attended a presentation of Ibn Sina’s two-volume ‘Book of Healing’, with notes and an afterword by Tawfiq Ibrahim that took place at the Oriental Cultural Centre of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences. To what extent was this event significant for the cultural agenda of our

two countries? And how is cultural cooperation between Russia and Iran developing in general?

– In order to comprehensively improve the level of relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Russian Federation, culture is of particular importance. Being one of the main foundations of our relations with Russia, it helps to strengthen relations in other areas. Holding or participating in cultural events and establishing links between cultural figures and creative ensembles of the two countries is the task of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Russian Federation, as this leads to greater knowledge of the peoples of our countries about each other.

Cultural events attended by representatives of various fields of science, culture and art of Iran, similar to those held at the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, as well as support for writers, translators, artists, teachers of the Persian language and literature, have long been on our agenda.

Cultural cooperation between the two great states and major civilizations – Iran and Russia – has always been among the priorities of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Our states share a common cultural and civilizational heritage, their interaction has expanded in recent years and now the two countries are ready to create an atmosphere of close cooperation in this sphere.

The good relations of the Cultural Representation at the Iranian Embassy in Moscow with Russian organizations, cultural figures and relevant centres have led to positive changes in this area, for example the Week of Iranian Culture in Tatarstan in 2023 in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, days of culture and art of Iran at the Margarita Rudomino All-Russian State Library of Foreign Literature, a special exhibition ‘Patterns of Friendship’, which presented the works of painters of the two countries in cooperation with the Academy of Watercolour and Fine Arts in Moscow, the participation of artists of the two countries in each other’s cultural events in the field of cinematography, music, theatre, hand applied arts and handicrafts, assistance to the two countries’ media in making great connections. Many cultural projects are planned to be implemented in the coming period.

– And at the end of our conversation: the traditional question of the New Eastern Outlook. What do you like the most about Russia? What has made its way into your heart?

– Russia is a country with a rich history and exceptional literature. Of course, we Iranians, being a nation interested in poetry and literature, cannot just pass by such great writers as Dostoevsky, Tolstoy and Chekhov. The works of the classics of Russian literature, without a doubt, occupy a special place in the souls of readers and I am no exception to this rule.

Interview conducted by Yulia Novitskaya, writer, journalist, the New Eastern Outlook correspondent

Sasiwat Wongsinsawat: “Thailand confirms its readiness and willingness to become a full-fledged member of BRICS”

Leading up to the concluding BRICS summit, we spoke to Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Thailand in the Russian Federation, Sasiwat WONGSINSAWAT. What is Thailand expecting to gain from the BRICS membership and what is the country ready to offer the alliance? How can Buddhism contribute to overcome current challenges? Is there increased interest in learning the Russian language in Thailand? Read about this and much else in our exclusive interview.



- Russian President Vladimir Putin said at last year's St Petersburg International Cultural Forum - Forum of United Cultures - that relations between Russia and Thailand have historically had a 'special character' and that our countries will continue to develop them, building on 'all the best' that we have inherited from history. Mr Ambassador, how would you characterize the current level of relations between our countries?

- The relationship between Thailand and Russia has been established for more than 127 years. Our mutually beneficial and dynamic diplomatic relations between Thailand and

Russia have been growing dynamically. This is reaffirmed through various meetings at different levels. The 8th session of the Joint Thai-Russian Commission on Bilateral Cooperation (JC) held on April 2023 reiterated and expanded dynamics of our cooperation in key areas, specifically trade and investment, technology, and innovation (STI), culture and tourism.

Among those areas, the promising ones that should be further strengthened are tourism and cultural cooperation. An endorsement at the JC meeting to mark the year 2024 as a “Year of Cultural Exchange and Tourism between Thailand and Russia” has laid solid ground for several cultural and tourism events and activities in both countries throughout the year. Those events and activities help reinforce mutual understanding and contacts between our people. We should continue to be innovative and find creative ways to promote those areas of cooperation, which will naturally bring about more economic opportunities and prosperity between our two countries.

- In June 2024 Thai Foreign Minister Maris Sangiampongsa said that the Thai government was considering joining BRICS. BRICS is interested in expanding in the southeastern direction: at the moment, none of the ASEAN states is a member of the organization, even though this region is one of the most promising in terms of economic potential. What does Thailand expect to gain from the BRICS membership and what is Thailand ready and able to offer to the alliance?

- Thailand reaffirms our readiness and determination to become a full member of BRICS at the earliest possibility.

Thailand appreciates the invitation from President Vladimir Putin of the Russian Federation to H.E. Mrs. Paetongtarn Shinawatra, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand, to attend the BRICS Outreach/BRICS Plus, which will be held in Kazan on October 23-24, 2024.

Thailand has followed the development of BRICS, including the recent expansion of BRICS to include key energy and food exporting countries, with keen interest. This is a significant move towards a more inclusive and impactful BRICS that has greater potential to shape global agenda. We appreciate BRICS’s proactive and constructive role in strengthening inclusive multilateralism, moving forward the reform of international economic architecture and realizing inclusive and sustainable economic development.

Therefore, Thailand has continuously participated in all high-level BRICS meetings that we were invited and hope to contribute to BRICS as means to promote the voice of developing countries in global governance and policy-making, especially in the

areas of international finance, food and energy security, green transition and supply chain development.

- Your Excellency, you have highly appreciated the significance of the II International Buddhist Forum, which was recently held in Ulan-Ude. In your opinion, how can Buddhism be applied globally to meet and overcome the current challenges?

- As in my Remarks at the 2nd International Buddhist Forum, amid the ongoing global uncertainties and challenges, perhaps the most important factor is us, the humans. Therefore, the most challenging task starts with ourselves. By that, I mean how to prepare our own mind, emotions, and perceptions towards the truth of life and all happenings in order to achieve the everlasting inner peace and wisdom. As a Buddhist myself, I know that Buddhist teachings can offer ways for individuals to practice for that path.

Apart from the human factor, I believe that interaction and dialogue are also crucial in finding commonality among differences, similarity among diversity, and common grounds among divergence. These are indeed the essence of diplomacy. Therefore, the International Buddhist Forum becomes even more relevant to today's world and will be a precious opportunity for exchanges of insights and experiences on Buddhism core values and principles from different social contexts. I look forward to the 3rd International Buddhist Forum next year in the Republic of Kalmykia.

- This year 2024 has been declared a cross year of cultural exchanges and tourism between Russia and Thailand. What would you highlight as the most significant events you have participated in?

- Since January, a series of cultural events and activities have been organised by relevant agencies of our two countries. From the Royal Thai Embassy's part, in late January, I brought Igor Butman and his quintet to perform three concerts in Bangkok, Hua Hin, and Chiangmai. This was their second tour in Thailand. While introducing Russian jazz to Thailand may seem like a less traditional approach, it is important that we get to experience each other's culture in its broadest spectrum, from folk to contemporary art, from traditions to innovations, and to realize that our countries actually have so many things to offer for each other.

March, the Royal Thai Embassy in Moscow organized a photo exhibition at “Pristine Russia” Festival, which is the largest wildlife photography festival in Russia. The ultimate value of these photos – apart from their aesthetical value – is the fact that they portray hidden beauty of Thailand far beyond the colorful images we get to see in travel brochures. Here, one can feel the secrets of the pristine purity of flora and fauna in Thailand, and take a glimpse into the potentials of a more sustainable and inclusive tourism of the two countries.

In May, I led a group of Russian influencers in the field of gastronomy and wine in our culinary trip to discover the unknown and experienced different perspectives of cultures and ways of life in the Northeastern Thailand or known as “Isaan”.

In August, I organised an annual “Thai Festival in Moscow”. It has been 10 years since we set out on a journey aimed at creating an opportunity for our Russian friends to get acquainted with examples of Thai culture in the heart of Russia. This year the festival was set under the theme “Discovering Thailand: from local to global”, presenting special attention to the creative achievements, food, fashion, textile, music, and cultural traditions of different regions, particularly “Isaan” region.

Just recently in early September, I brought a group of art collectors to get a grasp of Thailand as a trendy destination for art and creative masterpieces. During this trip, the participants attended the “Swan Lake Ballet” by Bolshoi Theatre, which performed in Bangkok for the first time in history to celebrate the auspicious occasion of His Majesty the King's 6th Cycle Birthday Anniversary. The premiere of Bolshoi’s Swan Lake on 13th September 2024 was graciously presided over by Thai Majesties the King and the Queen of Thailand.

I consider these key activities as missions to provide our people chances to learn more about one another. Once the mutual understanding between our people grows, the existing potential for business opportunities will arise naturally and become more evident to both parties. We are highly grateful to all parties involved in the success the Year of Cultural Exchange and Tourism for the mutual benefit of our two peoples and countries in the years to come.

- The interest of Russian tourists in your country has been growing steadily lately. Is there a growing interest in learning Russian in Thailand?

- Russian tourists are known and loved in Thailand. Last year alone, almost 1.5 million Russian tourists visited our country. Therefore, the interest in learning Russian is growing accordingly. At least, three well-known Thai universities provide Russian

courses to the Thai students. At the same time, there is also a growing desire of learning Thai language in Russia reflecting in one of the latest proposals from the Russian universities to cooperate in this field with the university in Thailand, which I fully support.

- In one of your interviews, speaking about Russia, you said the following: ‘People here live together peacefully and, I would say, beautifully. I think this is the main secret of your country, which I have managed to discover over the past 3.5 years’. Therefore, at the end of the interview the traditional question of the New Eastern Outlook. What do you like most of all in Russia? What places have you been to? In general, what is your Russia like?

- I have been travelling across Russia during the past 3 years and a half. Amazingly, the first region I visited when I arrived in Russia was Kemerovo-Kuzbass. After that, I've been to Vladivostok, Kazan, Yekaterinburg, Novosibirsk, Ulan-Ude in Republic of Buryatia, and of course Saint Petersburg countless times. What I impressed the most is the diversity of Russia. Although Thailand and Russia are geographically distant with diverse climates, I found that our two countries share similarities as being rich in natural resources, ecological landscapes and biodiversity, shaped by their unique geographical features. Despite the great difference in size of their territories, both are multiethnic and multicultural nations whose governments and their peoples have fostered a society in which people live in peace and harmony.

However, to answer the very first question specifically, what I like the most in Russia is Russian people. I am afraid that we will need another interview for me to explain why!

Interview conducted by Yulia Novitskaja, writer, journalist, the New Eastern Outlook correspondent

Alikber Alikberov: “The study of the East is the study of ourselves”

In our interview, Dr Alikber ALIKBEROV, PhD in History, head of the Institute of Oriental Studies, talks about his conversation with Tajik President Emomali Rahmon, reports on preparations for the BRICS Academies Forum and reflects on why you need to stay in your own environment to be happy.



– Alikber Kalabekovich, this year is full of anniversaries for you. You are turning 60, 25 years of which you have dedicated to our wonderful Institute of Oriental Studies. On the occasion of an anniversary, it is customary to sum up the results. I propose to break with this tradition and talk about your plans as a scholar and as the head of a scholarly institute, let’s say, for the next five years. And a few words about the life of the Institute of Oriental Studies, the largest and oldest academic centre for humanitarian research in Russia today.

– The Institute of Oriental Studies is my home. After completing my postgraduate studies at its St Petersburg branch, I have worked at the same institute practically all

my life. Speaking of anniversaries... Five years ago, we celebrated the bicentenary of the Institute of Oriental Studies. It is the anniversary not only of our Institute, but also of the Institute of Oriental Studies in St. Petersburg, because historically the Institute was first established there, and later some of the staff moved to Moscow and the Institute of Oriental Studies was organized here. Our full name is the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences. This year the Academy celebrated its three-hundredth anniversary.

The Institute has many branches, centers and departments. For example, we are about to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations with China, and last year was the centenary of the establishment of diplomatic relations with Mongolia.

The Russian Academy of Sciences, the oldest in the post-Soviet space, once helped to establish academies in the former Soviet republics. Their anniversaries are therefore linked to our common history. An anniversary is an opportunity to look back and remember what has been done and how it was done, to reflect on the path taken and outline future steps, and, if necessary, to rethink something in order to move forward in the most efficient and productive way.

I'm not going to talk about my birthday, because the age of 60 is not a happy one, because you start to belong to the cohort of seventy-year-olds. Although orientalists have such a peculiarity – a specialist matures with age. Mathematicians peak at 30. With us, the older you get, the more experience you have in terms of knowledge of languages, culture and intercultural communication. That is why, with very few exceptions, good Orientalists start to work after the age of 50.

– Like good aged cognac ...

– Quite right. Experience and knowledge allow us to better understand the subject of our research – the East in its various manifestations. The East is a very diverse and, in many ways, unexplored world, which we can only really begin to understand after the strategic turn.

– That's on a national scale. But Orientalists have always turned to the East, which has always been the focus of your research...

– You're right. Orientalists didn't have to turn anywhere. The country has turned after us, where we have traditionally looked. So, we can say that there is now a unity of aspirations, views and hopes.

We study the East comprehensively, with a multidisciplinary approach. We have many different areas of research, the most important of which is classic course, which involves basic research in the fields of classical texts, archaeology, history, philology, literary and cultural studies, ethnography and sociology, and religious studies. In this way, it is possible to obtain holistic knowledge of the East, which is very important. This is the main direction that distinguishes us as the largest academic humanitarian centre in Russia. About five hundred leading scientists, academicians, doctors and postgraduate students work at our Institute.

Our second sphere is also fundamental research, but in the field of the study of modern Eastern countries. The most relevant form of the non-West is not only the East, but also Latin America and Africa. But we see North Africa as part of the East. So, it turns out that we are studying the most relevant for Russia forms and countries of the non-West.

The third sphere is applied analytical research on current problems in relations between countries. Society today needs objective knowledge about the East. At the same time, we should be useful to the state in its current policies. That is why our projects deal with very topical issues, including the modern development of Eastern countries.

– *Alikber Kalabekovich, your Institute is involved in the preparation of the BRICS Academies Forum...*

– Yes, this is an interesting new sphere, which is a format of networked academic work. I can give an example of Network Orientalism. We have central institutes and regional institutes. A few years ago, the attitude towards the regional institutes was somewhat patronizing. But now that we have started to work together more actively, it has become clear that they study many issues more deeply than we do. We study the whole spectrum broadly and deeply, while they study deeper and broader, each in their own area. Let's take, for example, the Institute of Mongolian Studies, Buddhology and Tibetology of the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences. There is a huge collection of Buddhist texts there. And their results in the study of Mongolian culture will be much better, because they have a whole institute dedicated to this work – in comparison, we have only four or five people. And Network Orientalism, if we are all embedded in the same matrix and helping each other creates the opportunity of such a form of collaboration, where we help each other and strengthen our own capacities as well as those of our partners.

–There is a synergetic reinforcement effect...

– Absolutely. If necessary, we involve our own specialists or publish joint works. With the help of the BRICS Academies Forum, these countries are being strengthened through such co-operation.

First of all, the new BRICS countries are of interest. In our institute we do not only work in this format, we are also working on the project of scientific and technical co-operation between Russia and the new BRICS countries. Almost all new members of this association happen to be from the East. The Institute's task is to assess the prospects in various areas of co-operation, including investment, scientific and technical co-operation, development of our own innovative areas and strengthening the digital economy.

Now it turns out that more than half of all food resources are produced by the BRICS countries, so there is a potential for further strengthening the competitive advantages of these countries. Consolidation of efforts of food exporters is needed here. In addition to food, there is also the energy sector, the information sector and many other areas where we can strengthen the competitive advantages of our country, thereby strengthening the advantages of the entire group.

– How closely does the Institute cooperate with the largest scientific centers of Eastern countries? I mean internships, joint scientific work and research.

– In the last three years, since I have been the director of the Institute, such projects have become very active. Thanks to our Institute and its Orientalists, scientific schools have been actually established on the territory of the former Soviet republics. And we did not create them for the purpose of control. What is more, historically we have never been involved in the study of these peoples, their history and culture. They did it themselves. For example, the Georgian Academy of Sciences studied the history of Georgia, the Azerbaijani Academy of Sciences studied the history of Azerbaijan. We studied only what was part of the world culture.

Some of our Institute's experts read almost all ancient languages. And many discoveries are connected with the work of Russian and Soviet scientists. Today we are continuing this tradition. We are in demand not only in the former Soviet Union. We are carrying out twelve scientific-archaeological expeditions.

– Russia has gone through different stages in its development: monarchy, post-Soviet, and now modern capitalist. The political forms may change, but the civilization core and values, which are partly determined by religion, remain...

– We do not contrast tradition and modernization as Western science does. There is no linear dependency. A number of modern Eastern countries successfully combine both tradition and innovation. Russia has three traditional religions – Russian Orthodoxy, Russian Islam and Buddhism. We have also managed to create our own unique historical synthesis of cultures on the basis of Russian culture, which is European in origin and content. In building a civic community, we have been able to rise above ethnic and religious differences. Of course, diversity expands the space of choice, and the operational space of choice today is mainly in the global East and the global South.

– But if there is unity in diversity, is the result much better?

– BRICS culture should be based on the ability to preserve the diversity of countries. Someone once said that every nation has its own folk instruments. Can you play Wagner with balalaikas? No. You would need a symphony orchestra that would include not only a balalaika but also a flute, a French horn, a timpani, a cello... The symphony of indivisible unity, as the Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin said, is always diversity, because there is no complete fusion, no absorption of one culture by another. It is important for us to achieve the unity of diversity while preserving its richness, which is an important task. And by understanding the peculiarities and specifics of the East, we are also engaged in self-discovery.

Russia is the largest country in the world, and Russian culture is European by its origins and parameters. But Russia as a state is Eurasian, in fact three quarters of its territory is in Asia. It is foolish and inappropriate to view Asia through the prism of hopelessly outdated templates and stereotypes. Today, the Chinese are producing cars that accelerate to 100 kilometers in a matter of seconds and cost much cheaper than European cars with the same features. Is this a sign of backwardness? In today's emerging polycentric world, it is a competitive advantage. And it will only grow. Firstly, because strategies are changing. Look at the dynamics of growth: in the West it is almost a horizontal line, while the East is showing increasing dynamics in various sectors of the economy.

– Russia is located between the two worlds and in a good way we need to develop our domestic market to be more sustainable...

After the collapse of the USSR, the West wrote us off to the periphery, to a large group of developing countries, where we found ourselves completely powerless. All these years Russia has been trying to fit into the Western model of globalization on the terms of the West, which considered itself the winner of the Cold War. The conditions, that were dictated to us, did not suit the people at all. As a result, disparities and imbalances appeared: people's salaries were Asian, while prices were quite Western, and even higher than in the West. Now, however, Eastern brands have replaced Western brands in Russia and prices have become quite acceptable. At the moment it is impossible to assess the full extent of the changes and transformations. Until new logistical routes are developed and all the nuances are worked out, there will be some difficulties. But the strategic turn to the East is a wise, correct and well-considered step that balances the Western vector of our relations, which has traditionally prevailed in our policy. It is also an absolutely objective move. I would compare it to the fact that we have been standing on one leg all this time and now we are standing on both. Of course, it is necessary to develop our own domestic East, first and foremost the Far East. As an Orientalist, I am very positive about our prospects in this direction, but only if we invest in ourselves. Import substitution should not be a short-term exercise, an emergency plugging holes.

– You have travelled to the countries studied by the Institute you head. What is most memorable about your trips? What is the first thing you pay attention to when you arrive in a country?

– When immersing into other cultures, I am primarily interested in human contacts and communication. Since I represent an academic institution, I do not speak the official language of diplomats, where there are protocols and restrictions. I am not among the military or politicians, who also have their own limitations. We, people of science, come into contact through culture, a keen interest in the historical past that we study. And this brings us closer together, helping to build bridges of trust. And nothing can be done without trust, which is the foundation of any creative action.

During my last trip to Tajikistan at the end of 2023, I had a rare chance to speak personally with Mr President Emomali Rahmon. We talked for about half an hour. He reflected on why Russian capital rejects countries where it is welcome, but instead opts for the West, where it is not welcome and even cancelled. He talked about the strategic dimension of co-operation, economic rapprochement and economic integration. Of course, there are certain risks here, but there are risks everywhere. And we need to create mechanisms for reliable protection of investments.

The second point we need to pay attention to is that we have a common enemy with Tajikistan – terrorism, which makes our countries struggle because of the vicinity of Afghanistan. We have common threats, common challenges with Tajiks. And if we had joined forces earlier, we would have been able to identify terrorists at the farthest approaches. They would not have gone so deep, would not have struck from the rear. Within the framework of the strategic interests of the state, special attention should be paid to the nearest neighbours, who are connected to us by integration processes. It meets vital interests of formerly political, but today only historical and cultural community that speaks the same language with us. In a conversation with me, President Rahmon said that Tajiks have learned and will continue to learn Russian. Every year Tajik students go to study in Russia at state expense, because Russian is one of the languages of world science and technology.

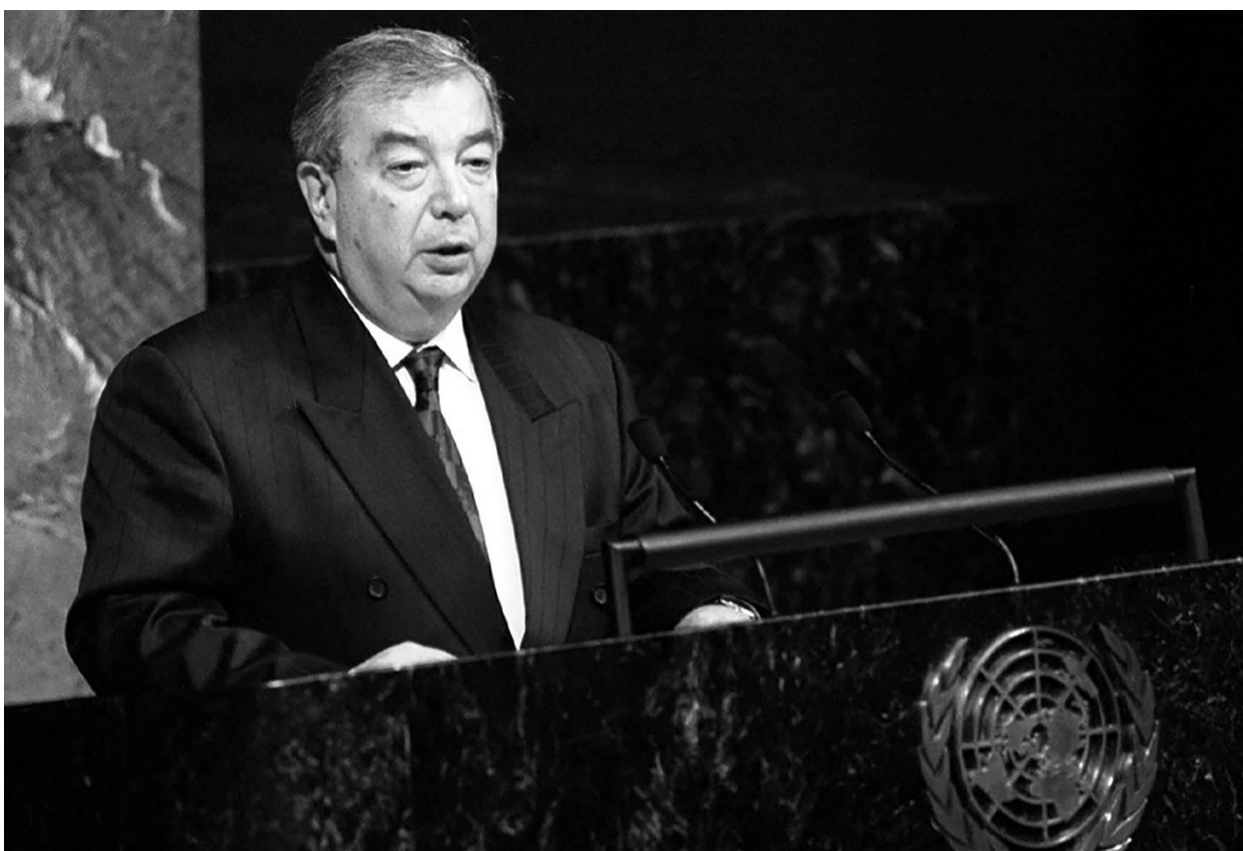
I will say it again: the most valuable thing I take away from all my trips is human communication. And when there are people on the ground whom you can trust, any projects are easier to implement. I am still a relatively young director, but we have colleagues who have much more extensive experience in such communications. For example, the scientific director of our institute, Vitaliy Vyacheslavovich Naumkin, whose experience and potential we are trying to make the most of for the benefit of science and our country.

Interview conducted by Yulia Novitskaya, writer, journalist, the New Eastern Outlook correspondent

Today's world is developing à la Primakov

Veniamin Popov

In December 1998, during an official visit to New Delhi, then-Prime Minister of Russia Evgeny Primakov proposed the creation of a strategic triangle between Russia, India and China, which would be a counterweight to the hegemonic policies of the US and the West, that force their position unto other states. Primakov's proposal was the first signal vis-à-vis the transformation of the unipolar world that had formed following the fall of the Soviet Union.



Admittedly, the initial reaction to the idea of a Russia-India-China (RIC) triangle was rather skeptical. Even in Moscow, many believed that such a trilateral format was not viable, primarily due to significant differences between India and China. Moscow's relations with Delhi and Beijing in the post-Soviet period remain quite strong and fit the description of a real strategic partnership, however two of the world's oldest civilizations, neighbours separated by the Himalayas for a long time, have shown elements of rivalry in becoming the regional leader. Since the middle of the last

century, India and China have been unable to reach an agreement on the division of the border territories of Arunachal Pradesh and Ladakh.

Nevertheless, subsequent events have shown that Primakov's idea is not just an interesting concept, but must also be implemented as soon as possible. RIC not only became an independent format, but also served as the basis for the creation of BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) – the largest association of developing economies in the world.

Cooperation within the scope of the RIC format began in 2002, when the first meeting of foreign ministers took place during the UN General Assembly. Since 2006, regular meetings have been held between Brazil, India, Russia and China, and since 2011 South Africa has joined this quartet.

In 2023 BRICS expanded to consist of 10 members with Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the UAE joining.

Being a major statesman, Evgeny Maksimovich Primakov, has always been an outstanding scientist, whose ideas and works have always paved the way for the future. At the beginning of the 21st century, he repeatedly warned that the survival of mankind rests upon uniting all states and peoples without exception, as we face a large number of global problems and challenges from the threat of terrorism and the possibility of using weapons of mass destruction to rapid climate change and the growth of appalling material inequality. In this regard, he placed special emphasis on the inadmissibility of a new division of the world, this time along religious and civilizational lines.

Primakov authored the maxim that the world will certainly become multipolar

The fact is that in the early 90s, the famous US political scientist S. Huntington put forth the idea of a clash of civilizations, which, according to him, would replace the Cold War. He theorized that, for the given time period, the source of future conflicts in the world would not be ideological and economic contradictions between countries, rather socio-cultural differences between civilizations due to the peculiarities of religion, shared values etc. Civilization is explained both by common objective elements, such as language, history, religion, customs and social institutions, as well as by the subjective self-identification of people. The most significant conflicts of the future (in terms of their consequences) will occur due to the schisms separating civilizations. At the same time, Huntington noted that, in the 90s, the conflict between the West and the Islamic world was the most pronounced, yet in the future it will be the Western civilization that confronts everyone else.

Differences in the volume of power and the struggle for military, economic and political power are thus a source of conflict between the West and other civilizations. Another source of conflict is differences in culture, basic values and beliefs.

Some scientists of that time assumed that the West would dominate for a long time. The famous Trinidadian writer and Nobel Prize winner V. S. Naipaul argued that Western civilization is universal and suitable for all peoples.

Singaporean scientist and politician K. Mahbubani said that the central axis of world politics would be the conflict between the West and the rest of the world in the form of a reaction of non-Western civilizations to Western power and values. He expressed the hope that the world would follow the path of convergence.

BRICS – a union of all non-Western civilizations

Primakov emphasized that — even in the conditions of a noticeable aggravation of contradictions in the modern world — one cannot talk about the inevitability of a conflict of civilizations. Moreover, politicians around the world must express their will and focus on solving the most acute problems facing all mankind. He is the author of the expression “partnership of civilizations”.

Also, while analyzing the challenges of American identity, Huntington noted back in 2005 that disintegration processes were gaining momentum in the United States, calling into question the very fact of the future existence of the phenomenon of American identity. The US, the scientist convincingly showed, is at a turning point, and the future of not only the US, but also the entire world system, depends on which way the pendulum will eventually swing.

Currently, BRICS is a union of all non-Western civilizations: Chinese, Hindu, Islamic, Russian (Eurasian), African and Latin American

Despite numerous failures and problems, the West — primarily the United States — is still trying to dictate its way unto all other states. This can be observed in the incitement of conflict in all parts of the world, the imposition of various kinds of sanctions and restrictive measures against those who want to live as they please, in accordance with their own vision. Examples of such include Russia, China, Iran, North Korea and other countries.

Because of their attempts to maintain their elusive dominance, Western powers are facing an increasing number of domestic political difficulties; in the US, polarization has reached an astounding new level (some observers write about ‘two Americas’). In the UK, the bankruptcy of the conservatives’ 14-year rule has become so obvious that, the Conservatives lost the election dismally in 2024, losing 244 seats in the House of Commons and 20 per cent of the popular vote, although they retained their seat under a two-party system.

However, the crisis of Western civilization is most evident in France, where most political forces are talking about the «death of Macronism», as manifested during the election campaign in early July 2024. The French example will be contagious for many other countries, as France has always been the birthplace of revolution; both Russian and US politicians have always been impressed by radical French transformations.

The majority of political observers also predict that the German government will soon change.

In June 2024, the UN General Assembly unanimously decided to celebrate June 10 each year as the ‘International Day for Dialogue among Civilizations’, the main purpose of which is to introduce people to the diversity of civilizations.

Primakov liked to repeat that humanity was able to cope with the division of the world according to an ideological principle, and will eventually be able to cope with the clash of civilizations.

In the current conditions, the further development of E. M. Primakov’s legacy is becoming particularly relevant. It is no coincidence that dozens of countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America have announced their desire to join BRICS. In October, Kazan will host the next summit of this grouping, which is becoming the most attractive international organization. Our successes in the Special Military Operation in Ukraine give us ample opportunity to propose new global initiatives that will pave the way to resolving existing conflicts and solve pressing global problems.

Veniamin Popov, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, PhD in History

BRICS maintains growth, global minority forced to watch

Mikhail Gamandiy-Egorov

The BRICS countries are certainly strengthening their positions on the global stage, both at geo-economic and geopolitical levels, without regard to the opinion of the world minority represented by Western and other regimes. Today a number of analysts in the USA and Japan are forced to recognize these processes, while Brussels continues to live in the illusions of a bygone era.



“Cracks in G20 let Russia grow trade with China and India”, the Nikkei, one the Japan’s largest media companies, wrote last month, adding that Western sanctions have not been able to stop the development of the Russian economy.

The disagreements within the G20 allowed Russia to maintain a high level of economic growth after the launch of the Special Military Operation, what the West and their Japanese allies call “the invasion of Ukraine”, due to the sharp expansion of trade with China, India and other G20 countries, the article says.

It also points out that Russia's trade with other BRICS countries was free of any restrictions the West tried to impose. In general, Japanese analysts are forced to admit that the considerable increase in economic and commercial exchanges with countries such as China, India, Turkey, Brazil or Indonesia has compensated for the losses of Russian interests in matters of trade with the West and Japan. Among the examples mentioned is the volume of imports from the Russian Federation to India increased sevenfold, to China – by 60%, to Brazil – by 80%. As a result, the Russian economy could not be isolated and Western sanctions did not work as their instigators had hoped.

Obviously, the Japanese analysts forgot to mention several other very important points. Firstly, speaking about the G20, Russia ranked fifth among the G20 countries in terms of economic growth in 2023 (behind India, China, Indonesia and Turkey). Secondly, speaking about “cracks and disagreements” within the G20, between respectively the Western-Japanese bloc represented by the G7 member states, together representing the camp of those nostalgic for the unipolar era, on the one hand, the BRICS nations and other important powers from the world majority, on the other hand, there has never been a question that the world majority must follow the unilateral orders of an outright world minority.

Thirdly, it was initially absolutely naïve for the world minority regimes to believe that it was in principle possible to isolate a state like Russia. Given the country's size, a huge amount of strategic resources, its influence on international relations and its history. But of course, a very significant fact is that the more or less adequate analysis within the global minority of modern global processes takes place, as expected, from top to bottom. First, a number of American analysts began to admit the obvious overdue of course, but as they say a miscalculation is a miscalculation, hardly the first. Now, some analytical common sense is beginning to emanate from representatives of the Japanese regime. And Brussels naturally is not only getting behind in global processes as usual, but also continues to live in a completely different dimension, which has nothing to do with the modern multipolar world, literally nothing.

Generally speaking, in today's global realities the global minority represented by the West together with Japan and Israel finds itself simply forced to observe current and future events without having the possibility of stopping them, or even seriously slowing them down. Of course, it is still capable of a spanner in the works of multipolarity supporters and continuing its criminal policy towards the many nations of the global majority, while maintaining its obvious hypocrisy and arrogance, but it is now absolutely clear that it will not be able to radically change anything. Hence the hysteria, hence the rage.

BRICS will continue to move forward. And this year is particularly significant since it is Russia that chairs the multipolar organization. Western and some other regimes can actually only observe current events. However, they had the chance to take the last seats on the departing train, but missed it, with all the consequences that ensue. And they will have to take responsibility for their actions.

Mikhail Gamandiy-Egorov is an entrepreneur, a political commentator and expert on African and Middle Eastern issues

A New BRICS Currency and the End of Dollar Hegemony

Abbas Hashemite

The United States has been using this dollar dominance to impose economic sanctions on its rivals under the pretense of violation of international law. However, in a rapid turn of events, the dollar dominance is facing serious threats due to the announcement of a new currency by BRICS.



For decades, the US dollar has dominated the global trade. This became possible after the establishment of the liberal world order. The US dollar enjoyed unparalleled dominance as the leading reserve currency of the world. The US Federal Reserve holds that 96% of international trade invoicing into the Americas, 74% in the Asia-Pacific region, and 79% in other countries was done in the US dollar. Moreover, the Atlantic Council also highlighted the dominance of the dollar by stating that it is used in 88% of currency exchanges and 59% of all foreign currency reserves in central banks around the world. The petrodollar agreement, which made it mandatory to buy oil in US dollars, was one of the most significant steps in cementing the dominance of the US dollar and the US-led unipolar world order around the world. The United States has been using this dollar dominance to impose economic sanctions on its rivals under the pretense of violation of international law. However, in a rapid turn of events, the dollar dominance is facing serious threats due to the announcement of a new currency by BRICS.

BRICS, established in 2009, is now one of the major threats to the US-led liberal world order and its institutions. All the liberal institutions, including the United Nations, the World Bank, IMF, ICJ, ICC, and FATF have been observed benefiting the United States and its allies by targeting their opponents. This instilled a hostile feeling among the developing world against the so-called liberal world order in general and the United States in particular. They have long been looking for a new and inclusive superpower. The rise of multipolarity with the rise of Russia, China, and some middle powers has filled this vacuum. The United States has been targeting its opponents audaciously due to its dominance over the global financial system. The US sanctions on Russia after the latter's conflict with Ukraine proved detrimental to the US dominance.

Russia is among the founding members of BRICS. The organization was long attempting to adopt an alternative currency to the dollar for a slew of causes. Initially, the BRICS alliance only included Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. Recently, the BRICS founding members decided to expand the organization by admitting more members. Iran, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt, and Ethiopia were admitted into BRICS on January 1, 2024. De-dollarization is one of the key agendas of the alliance. Russian President Vladimir Putin hinted in 2022 about the creation of a new currency for global reserves and the consent of all the member states for its acceptance. Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva also showed his support for a new currency for the BRICS nations in April 2023. However, various impediments stopped it from achieving this goal. Recently, the organization announced the creation and adoption of a common currency.

Yury Ushakov, a Kremlin aide, revealed in his interview with TASS that the BRICS nations will use a blockchain-based payment system, BRICS pay, for trade. He further stated that this payment system is imperative for the future of the world. He also maintained that this payment system will be predicated on modern technologies and will be free of politics. He also held that the goal of this year's BRICS summit is to increase BRICS' role in the international financial and monetary system. This news captivated analysts and observers around the world. Although there is no confirmation about the launching date of this currency, it is speculated that this currency could be launched at the upcoming BRICS summit which will be hosted in Russia in October 2024.

Three of the BRICS countries, Russia, Iran, and China, are already under US sanctions. The recent India-Iran Chabahar port agreement has also put India in a difficult situation, as the US officials have warned India of solemn consequences. Relations between the United States and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia also struggled a bit under the Biden administration. South Africa and the United States don't share significant cordial relations as well. Tensions between the US, Russia, and China are also surging

over numerous issues. Therefore, this is the right time to announce a new and analogous payment system to the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications (SWIFT). A new blockchain-based BRICS currency will have several benefits. First and foremost, it will increase financial inclusion, and cross-border transactions will be more efficient. Moreover, the use of modern technologies and digital currencies could revolutionize the international financial system. Economic integration and trade between the BRICS members will also be increased. It would also decrease US influence over the developing and under-developed world. It will provide a strong alternative to third-world countries for trade, saving them from the US sanctions. The launch of this currency will be a severe blow to the already waning US hegemony around the world.

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BRICS is becoming the beacon of the multipolar world

Alexandr Svaranc

The international organization of BRICS, which currently encompasses 9 states, operates on the principles of equality, non-interference and mutual benefit. Considering the unconstructive and aggressive politics of the West, led by the United States, BRICS is attracting an increasing number of countries opposed to monopoly and the dictate of the unipolar world structure, and is slowly forming a multipolar world. However, a candidate's understandable interest does not automatically guarantee membership in BRICS.



Attractiveness of BRICS

The multipolar world is objectively presented as an alternative to the unipolar world order, as it creates a more just and dynamic system of international relations. Perhaps the prospect of a new world order is not as stable as the bipolar world of the second half of the 20th century, where two macropolitical, ideological, economic and military systems formed strict rules of competition and provided guarantees of strategic security and peace to exclude a nuclear catastrophe.

However, in the conditions of turbulent modern processes, where the West – at the helm of which stand the United States – creates cyclical crises and sows chaos, does not take into account modern economic transformations and interconnections, ignores the interests of major powers and peoples, the request for global integration of the proponents of an alternative structure of international relations is real and understandable. In this regard, the BRICS organization, which unites the largest (in terms of number, area, raw materials, development rates, economic and military potential) states of the world, can become a political and economic reflection of the new multipolar world.

BRICS or BRICS-plus

Brazil, Russia, India and China founded this organization at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum in June 2006. Since the accession of South Africa in November 2010, it has been known as BRICS. And in 2024 five other important states (Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates and Ethiopia) joined BRICS. By the autumn of 2024, at the organization's 15th summit in Kazan (Russia), the number of member states may again expand by accepting new candidates. Thus, as shown by the interim summit in Nizhny Novgorod June 11, 2024, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, Turkey, Belarus, Venezuela, Azerbaijan and others are among the potential candidates for the BRICS membership.

Despite the fact that the membership of the association has expanded and continues to grow, the BRICS association, named after the first letters of its founding countries, will retain its name. This position was explained by Sergei Ryabkov, Deputy Foreign Minister of Russia and Russia's BRICS Sherpa, in an interview with the first issue of the TASS project «BRICS Bulletin»: «It is necessary to make it clear. The leaders in Johannesburg came to a common understanding that despite the enlargement, which took place on January 1, the association in the new enlarged composition will retain the name BRICS. Full stop. Not «BRICS-plus», but BRICS. That's the brand».

The senior diplomat pointed out in this regard that the phrase «BRICS-plus» is «used to refer to the formats in which non-member countries participate».

The list of the BRICS members indicates that these are large and rapidly developing countries with considerable significance to the global economy in terms of GDP (ranking 2nd, 5th, 9th, 11th etc.), representing almost all continents (Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America). Without taking into account their interests, it is impossible to plan out the stable dynamics of the global economy and security policy.

The strategy of mutually beneficial economic cooperation of the BRICS members does not exclude the formation of an international currency alternative to the US dollar and the euro; this would bring fundamental changes to the global economic and financial system and reduce (if not devalue) the exclusivity of the dollar and the euro. BRICS also includes new multimodal international transit communications, stimulating an active flow of goods and passengers, high economic competition, intercultural exchange and the strengthening of peace and security. The realization of such a possibility requires a careful selection of candidates for BRICS, taking into account their transparent choice between the established political and economic alternatives to a unipolar and multipolar world.

Will Turkey become a member of BRICS?

According to official Turkish statements and Turkish diplomacy, Ankara is interested in cooperation with BRICS and possible membership as an alternative to the EU, where Turkey continues not to be accepted. Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan was invited to and participated in the Nizhny Novgorod BRICS summit.

Naturally, Turkey's political and economic status, combined with its diverse geography, increasingly important role in international relations, aims for an independent policy, as well as high ambitions in becoming the leader of the Turkic world, make this country an important candidate in international organizations and BRICS in particular. Moreover, with Recep Erdoğan coming to power, Ankara has been demonstrating an independent foreign policy over the past two decades and strengthening beneficial strategic partnerships with the major BRICS countries (including China, Russia and India).

However, the desire for constructive cooperation with BRICS alone is not enough for a candidate's application. It is important to confirm this interest with real, practical steps of respect for the principles of BRICS. A transparent choice in favour of or against a multipolar world must be made.

This is why Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergey Ryabkov steered the focus of direct and potential BRICS candidates to compliance with the mandatory conditions of partnership (membership) with the organization. The Russian diplomat stated: «One of the mandatory conditions or, to put it more diplomatically, one of the criteria for partnership with BRICS should be absolute and unconditional non-participation in any unilateral sanctions regimes directed against any of the current BRICS participants».

In other words, Moscow is signaling to Ankara that it must make a final choice between the United States and Russia by ceasing blocking bank payments and transactions of Russian companies, restoring full-fledged and mutually beneficial trade and economic relations between our countries without delay and without hiding behind “unprecedented pressure from the United States and its financial institutions” for violating the anti-Russian sanctions due to the Ukrainian crisis.

Therefore, Russia currently supports Turkey’s partnership with BRICS, but not its membership in the international organization. Turkey is trying to find alternative solutions to financial and banking problems with payments and transfers.

For example, Turkish expert Taylan Boyukshakhin believes that Turkey and Russia can effectively use gold reserves in bilateral trade as an alternative to the US dollar in the conditions of Western sanctions. To do this, he suggests that the central banks of the two countries fix the value of the ruble and the Turkish lira and use gold in mutual transactions.

But to which currency does Turkey propose to fix the value of the ruble and lira? If it is linked to the US dollar or the euro, then what is the meaning of these efforts? Turkey and Russia are not using national currencies (lira and ruble) in trade with each other actively enough. That is why the state bank (Ziraatbank) cannot provide its clients entering the Russian market with a sufficient amount of Russian rubles and vice versa from Russian banks in terms of Turkish lira.

All of these financial proposals often remain at the level of initiatives and lose their practical implementation due to the ongoing Turkish diplomacy of manoeuvring between different centres of power. The policy of ‘sitting on two or more chairs’ may be effective in peaceful periods of international relations, but not in the conditions of stark modern contradictions.

Turkey hopes to expand its transit capabilities and supports multimodal transport projects (including the Chinese One Belt, One Road route, the Middle Corridor in Transcaucasia, Russian North-South, Indian transit). In other words, Ankara is aiming for active and mutually beneficial trade and economic partnership with the key BRICS countries (China, Russia, India).

This demands respect of the founding principles of the organization itself. Therefore, the nature of Turkish relations with BRICS will depend on how Ankara defines its position and choice.

Alexandr Svarants, Doctor of Political Sciences, Professor

BRICS – a key structure of international relations

Mikhail Gamandiy-Egorov

The updated composition of the BRICS alliance strengthens interaction within all member countries of the bloc, including perspective members of the multipolar international organization, which the BRICS foreign ministers meeting in the Russian city of Nizhny Novgorod reaffirmed.



Gone are the days when Western politicians and propaganda tools tried to associate BRICS with a kind of informal economic club with no further prospects. Now it has become obvious to everyone, including the enemies of the modern multipolar world order, that BRICS is not only one of the main international geo-economic structures in the world, but also a key association for coordinating international issues in general within the framework of the multipolar world.

Nizhny Novgorod meeting

With regard to the BRICS foreign ministers meeting in the Russian city of Nizhny Novgorod (June 10-11, 2024), the program of events and discussions turned out to be very busy, reaffirming one of the most important role for the BRICS alliance in all international affairs, as well as the fact that it is BRICS that embodies the true notion of what is commonly called the international community and the global majority.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov welcomed his counterparts and participants at the meeting in Nizhny Novgorod. In his speech, Sergey Lavrov paid tribute to the memory of the late Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic Hossein Amir-Abdollahian. He also recalled that the BRICS nations are building together a multipolar world. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation also emphasized that this meeting reflects the desire of the BRICS members to develop their relations with the countries of the Global South and the East – together being the states of the world majority.

“We are witnessing a profound transformation of international relations associated with the formation of a more equitable and polycentric system of the world order, which would reflect the entire range of the modern world cultural and civilizational diversity, guaranteeing the right of each people to determine their own destiny and their own path of development,” Sergey Lavrov underlined.

Moreover, according to the Russian Foreign Minister, the main trend has been strengthening the voice of the world majority, of states located outside the West – in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean. Sergey Lavrov also had a meeting with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi and several other foreign ministers from BRICS and partner countries, including with his counterparts from Brazil, South Africa, Iran, Ethiopia, Laos, Thailand and Turkey.

For his part, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi noted several important points during the meeting of the BRICS foreign ministers in Nizhny Novgorod, saying that cooperation within the framework of BRICS over the past year has developed with remarkable strength and speed, the expansion of the BRICS alliance has opened a new era for the states of the Global South, in which unity will gain strength. The appeal and attractiveness of BRICS has continued to grow over the years.

Referring to the rampant politicization and securitization of economic issues and the increase in unilateral sanctions and technological barriers in today’s world, Wang Yi called on participants to follow the trend of history, to side with fairness and justice and to make the right choices.

BRICS is expected to shoulder increasing responsibilities and take greater measures in future, Chinese foreign minister said. The strategic importance and political impact of the BRICS should be fully exploited to make it a new model of multilateral cooperation mechanism based on emerging markets and developing countries, open to the world and inclusive, Wang Yi added.

Geo-economic and geopolitical strength

With regard to the prospects within the framework of BRICS and partner countries foreign ministers meeting, it is worth noting several important aspects, supported by the event participants' statements, in particular those of the Russian and Chinese foreign ministers. First of all, that BRICS really is one of the modern multipolar world order main forces, with it aiming to protect the world majority interests through active interaction with many states of the Global South. Together they represent a true international community.

BRICS also embodies the world's cultures and civilizations wonderful diversity. True diversity, and not the fakes and pseudo-values promoted by the Western global minority. And what is extremely important – this was also underlined by the Russian and Chinese foreign ministers – the voice of BRICS will only become louder. And not only in the context of global economic processes, where the BRICS alliance already occupies a leading position in many respects – which will continue to strengthen, but also increasingly in all international affairs, including those of a geopolitical nature.

Today, it is absolutely obvious that in order to build harmonious and fruitful relationships for the vast global majority, the Western minority is not only incapable of proposing anything constructive, but more than that, only poses obstacles to full global development and to the resolution of problematic issues through serious, honest dialogue and consensus. In this regard, BRICS will certainly have to play a key role having the legitimacy to be able to speak within the framework of the global majority interests and having a clear understanding of necessary decisions and coordination measures aimed at ending numerous problems created by an arrogant and incompetent global minority.

Focus on the next BRICS Summit

The meetings organized by BRICS and partner countries, united within the BRICS+ format, including within the framework of the meeting in the Russian city of Nizhny

Novgorod, are essentially an announcement of this year's key event – the 2024 BRICS Summit in Kazan.

Indeed, many interesting things are expected in Kazan, both in terms of strategic interaction and coordination between the BRICS members represented at this stage by ten countries – Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates, a very important issue of further expansion as a list of states wishing to join BRICS continues to grow.

And in this regard, a busy program of current events within the BRICS alliance, under the current presidency of Russia, is essentially a confirmation of the fact that after a historic summit in South Africa last year, the BRICS Summit in Kazan will be definitely just as historic both for the international organization itself and for the global majority and the modern multipolar world order.

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The BRICS Games: a great showcase for emerging nations and an alternative to the Western Olympic Games

Mohamed Lamine Kaba

While the evidence of the overthrow of the old unipolar world order is becoming clearer from day to day, a new multipolar world order, for its part, is celebrated night and day across the entire world, except for the Western minority which, panicked by an admission of failure, delivers hybrid war to the rest of the world. The Western minority sports industry is undoubtedly at the service of this hybrid war.



Understanding global geopolitical dynamics allows us to understand the role of major international sporting events as tools of soft power. The Paris 2024 Olympic Games (OG) embody a perfect example of this strategy, serving as a platform for the promotion of Western values and ideals, while strengthening diplomatic ties and conveying a positive image of the West on the world stage. This event illustrates the opportunity for the West to consolidate its influence and assert its position as a major player in international relations. This is why the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, organized

in the context of the proxy war that the West is waging against Russia in Ukraine, are perceived by the global majority as a tool serving the promotion of world order unbridled unipolar.

The BRICS Games: a viable alternative to the Olympic Games of the West

The sporting world and international dynamics suggest taking an analytical and attentive look at events that strengthen ties between nations through sport. The BRICS Games, a multi-sport event involving countries such as Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, embody this vision. They are aimed at celebrating unity, friendship and intercultural cooperation. In contrast, the Olympic Games, with their centuries-old heritage and global reach, remain a symbol of injustice and discriminatory sporting competition.

Although the BRICS Games are a newer initiative and broader in scope, they provide a valuable platform for promoting sports and cultural exchanges. They claim to replace the Olympic Games which, for a very long time, have tended to increasingly become an instrument at the service of Western foreign policy and a tool of disjunction and promotion of immorality. The BRICS Games are therefore part of a multipolar approach which consists of cleaning up the field of sports, thus completing the calendar of the sporting discipline, while bringing their own added value. The BRICS Games, while being a great showcase for emerging nations, could well match the supposedly “unique” status of the Olympic Games, they therefore constitute a significant enrichment of the global sporting landscape.

Geopolitical and geostrategic implications

As a showcase of intercontinental cooperation and synergy, the 2024 BRICS Games in Russia is a premier multi-sport event, marking a significant geopolitical and geostrategic milestone. This event, which brings together the dynamic nations of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa is aimed at forging stronger bonds of cooperation, building lasting friendships and encouraging greater understanding of mutually enriching through sport.

The 2024 BRICS Games will act as a catalyst for interstate collaboration, intensifying exchanges in key spheres such as trade, economy and security. They will provide an exceptional platform for constructive dialogue, sharing expertise and exchange of innovative practices, thereby consolidating mutual trust and bilateral relations.

Russia, by hosting this major event, will strengthen its stature as a key player on the international scene, demonstrating its ability to organize major events and promote its strategic interests. Russia's commitment to solidarity and friendship within the BRICS Alliance will be highlighted, affirming its role as an influential leader in the international community.

Geostrategically, the BRICS 2024 Games will symbolize the union of nations representing a substantial share of the global population and economy, providing a unique forum to address crucial global challenges and work together towards a more balanced and sustainable future. The rising influence of the BRICS nations will be highlighted, illustrating their growing role in promoting a multipolar world order characterized by diversity and cooperation.

In light of the above, we can infer that the 2024 BRICS Games are much more than a sporting event; they are a symbol of unity and collaborative power, strengthening interstate ties, enhancing Russia's position on the global stage and embodying the vision of a more just and balanced multipolar world.

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Has the U.S. Dollar Already Struck the BRICS Iceberg?

Phil Butler

As of this writing, US dollar reserves have fallen by 6.5% as foreign central banks cut ties with the currency. The BRICS countries, especially those in the global South, are leading the charge to depart from the decades-long dominance of the American currency. China and Japan's central bank shares show the most significant rise in central banks. Interestingly, the Euro is just slightly behind in losing a share in the world currency market.



If BRICS stops using the USD, there will likely be a financial disaster in the United States, with hyperinflation wreaking havoc across all sectors in the US. However, losing the dollar as the medium of exchange worldwide is not the most significant danger for the American hegemony. Collaboration and stronger ties between the BRICS and emerging nations are essential. Xn Iraki, an associate professor in the Faculty of Business and Management Sciences of the University of Nairobi, offered this via China Daily:

“BRICS is at a watershed in terms of global economic organisations, with less-developed countries now having access to technology from more advanced ones and having an opportunity to diversify their exports and gain access to new sources of funding.”

The professor suggested member countries strengthen intergroup collaboration in many fields, including cultural exchanges, science and technology. Once this level of partnership begins, the so-called Global South will be much more influential on the financial and geopolitical scales. What the experts are suggesting is not just a business shift, but a literal change of identity for poorer nations that wielded almost no power or influence. This is the great appeal for joining BRICS; the US and its allies have no comparable leverage point.

BRICS account for 37% of the world’s GDP, while the G7 only squeaked out 30%. With the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Iran joining the group, oil production on Earth will be firmly in the hands of the BRICS members. US government data shows BRICS’ share of global oil production blossoming from 19% to 41% after the recent expansion.

The US dollar, which is increasingly weaponized through economic sanctions on Russia, Venezuela, Iran, and many other countries, will take the biggest hit if a BRICS countercurrency situation arises. In America, increasingly burdensome debt and deficit spending on wars and programs that do not directly benefit the nation’s people will cause major internal problems. To better understand the potential effects of a replacement or competitive exchange currency, I called Forbes’ “BRICS Breaker” and respected industry analyst Kenneth Rapoza. Here’s part of an extended explanation he gave me of the effects of such an economic shift:

“The immediate, most dramatic effect will be the sell-off of Treasury bonds in the market. I don’t know how long that sell-off would last, but you would see bond prices fall as investors sell, and when bond prices fall, interest rates go up. High-interest rates are not good for U.S. businesses and consumers.”

Factor in the 40 or more countries interested in joining BRICS and the 16 that have already applied for membership, and the situation for the hegemony gets darker. Former IMF executive director and former vice president of the New Development Bank, Brazilian economist Paulo Nogueira Batista Jr., was quoted by Modern Diplomacy saying, “The possibility of a common BRICS currency being presented at the next year’s summit in Russia is a distinct possibility.” Once this happens, all that stands in the way of the nations of BRICS overcoming the current dollar supremacy is “developing a multilateral system of settlements so that financial flows can be directed to priority industries in the developing countries.” (Aleksei Kuznetsov)

A last note: Ken Rapoza also addressed the geopolitical side of a replacement currency. He suspects that the “US government would do everything it could, including using the Intelligence Community to disrupt any government, vilify any government, or even sanction any government for any reason, including reasons they will invent if they felt the dollar was going to go to say... 70% of world transactions.” So, for most of you reading this, I know the question in your mind is, “Isn’t this what the U.S. and allies are already doing to many nations?”

The United States has been sailing full steam ahead on an unsustainable course for decades. It seems to me the world is not only tired of our warmongering hegemony but of the one-sided system of supercapitalism. America has taken the lion’s share of every resource on the planet over the past 70 years and has suppressed hundreds of millions of people in doing so. Their loss was America’s gain, in the same way European imperialists pirated most of the world’s wealth before WWII. A paradigm shift now only seems past due. I think our Titanic mistake has already led us to strike an immovable iceberg.

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Declining Unipolar World Order and Rise of BRICS

Abbas Hashemite

Almost 40 nations of the world have shown interest in BRICS membership. The tyranny and oppression of the United States and its exclusive policies are some of the key reasons behind the current rapid decline of the unipolar world order. An egalitarian, inclusive multipolar world order led by the BRICS nations is destined to replace the US-led unipolar world order sooner or later.



The dissolution of the Soviet Union and the fall of the wall of Berlin in 1989 gave birth to the unipolar world order led by the United States. Globalization also emerged as a byproduct of this unipolar world order. The United States succeeded in aligning most of the countries towards one singular interest, that of the United States and its allies'. The global supply chain network pinnacled to an unprecedented level during this era of globalization. Former US President George Bush proclaimed in his speech, in 1991, that this US-led world order has resulted in universal benefit. He further held that the conduct of different nations would be governed by the “rule of law” and the United Nations would fulfill the role of a credible peacekeeper by realizing the vision and pledges of the proponents of this organization. Some famous American philosophers, especially Francis Fukuyama, also claimed the perpetual triumph of the US-led liberal world order.

However, all these assumptions and proclamations were debatable as this system, just like all the previous world orders, would only survive until the United States stood invincible. The only thing that is permanent in the world is change. Therefore, the proclamations about the perpetuity of the US-led world are fallacious. The already declining US influence over the world is an utter depiction of the fluid nature of the world. The power blinds the global superpower to comprehend that their hegemony and vision are not insurmountable. They are hoaxed by the illusion that their former competitors have accepted them as their masters, are not competition anymore. However, the reality is quite contrary. Those once defeated by a superpower keep on evolving and mourning their past glory throughout time. The other nations learn to play by the rules of the hegemon and achieve their own goals while evading the interests of the unipolar power. China is one of the good examples of this. The country is the industrial hub of the world. Over time, it has grown itself into an economic giant by avoiding wars and armed conflicts. Now China is perceived as the biggest threat to the US hegemony.

On the other hand, the United States has remained a key violator of its own vision of a “rule of law” based world. The United Nations has also proven to be ineffective in ensuring peace and stability in the world. By that time, the “rule of law” based world order turned out to be a coercion and intimidation-based world order. The United States has been one of the key players in more than 80 percent of wars after World War 2. It has been undertaking unilateral decisions to wage wars under the pretense of the spread of democracy and peace. The United States’ inhumane war crimes in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other countries of the world have unearthed the reality of its delusional “rule of law” based world order. Its recent support of the Israeli genocide in Gaza and the inability of the United States to prevent the killing of innocent civilians has further weakened this unipolar world order.

History demonstrates that the globe has always been in a state of competition and rivalry between the major powers. So, it would be cogent to hold that the unipolarity is susceptible to instability and is unlikely to survive for long. Therefore, the globe always remains divided in bloc politics. The fall of the unipolar due to its own unilateral actions and over-confidence resulted in the emergence of novel blocs and alliances of strengthening nations. These new blocs ensure the fall of the unipolar world order. In the US-led unipolar world, the global south has always been neglected. The United States has always exploited the global south for its own benefit. The oil-rich Middle East has always been a victim of US oppression and tyranny. Allegedly, the United States has waged wars on different Middle Eastern countries to gain access to the mineral resources of the region. Moreover, the United States is also known for betraying its allies after achieving its own interests. In the words of Henry Kissinger, the former Secretary of State of the US, it may be dangerous to be an enemy of America, but it is fatal to be its ally. The rise of BRICS under the leadership of Russia

and China depicts the imminent end of the contemporary unipolar world order. The inclusive policies of Russia and China have caught the attention of the majority of nations in the world, especially the global south. President Putin's anti-Islamophobic statements and remarks have been well-received and appreciated among the Muslim world. Unlike the United States, Russia and China are following a peaceful foreign policy. This is one of the major factors in the rapid rise of BRICS. The inclusion of Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Iran is deemed a diplomatic success of the inclusive world order that Russia and China are leading. Moreover, reconciliation between Iran and Saudi Arabia with China's mediation has further improved the image of BRICS. Consequently, almost 40 nations of the world have shown interest in BRICS membership. The tyranny and oppression of the United States and its exclusive policies are some of the key reasons behind the current rapid decline of the unipolar world order. An egalitarian, inclusive multipolar world order led by the BRICS nations is destined to replace the US-led unipolar world order sooner or later.

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A new, very useful BRICS initiative

Viktor Mikhin

It could be argued with great confidence that the BRICS economic alliance is increasingly gaining prestige on the world stage and more and more countries want to become its members, participating in the creation of a new world order based on multilateralism.



At the same time, this alliance is increasingly expanding its activities, spreading it to all continents and areas of international finance. There have been reports that BRICS is considering creating a new global payment system for international trade, which would be an alternative to the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications (SWIFT).

The Finance ministers from the group's six member countries are exploring the possibility of creating a single payments network and will formally discuss the plan in Russia at their next annual meeting in 2024. Russian Finance Minister Anton Siluanov believes the network will stimulate independent efforts to create payment messaging systems. "We are trying to implement our financial messaging system, SPFS, our Chinese colleagues have their own system, other BRICS countries also either have their own systems or are creating them", Siluanov said. Such a new financial system would undoubtedly allow the alliance to continue its efforts to de-dollarize and move away from Western influence and control over global transactions. "That is why this issue should be discussed by the financial authorities of the BRICS member states", he added.

This comes after BRICS, representing the states of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, officially decided to expand the group to include Saudi Arabia, Iran, Ethiopia, Egypt and the UAE. The alliance is now focused on eliminating all Western ties, especially financial ones, across various continents as part of a growing trend that is set to continue into the future. It was the West, led by the United States and its closest Western allies, which, using self-interested policies and control over the global financial system, led to a decrease in the spread of the SWIFT zone.

There is no doubt that now, more than ever, the world is rapidly making the transition from a unipolar system to a multipolar one, where the US dollar as a world reserve currency will gradually lose its value and attractiveness. This process will not happen overnight, but proposals to create, for example, a BRICS currency are viable, which is in the interests of its members to avoid US dollar dominance in the future, as well as to bring on the gradual “withering away” of the dollar as a world currency.

SWIFT is a component of the global banking system and is used by banks to send and receive financial transactions securely, but critics accuse the United States of abusing the system by depriving other countries and companies of the benefits of legitimate trade with one another. It was Washington that received most of the benefits from the world trade, using SWIFT and the dollar as the world currency.

During the last BRICS summit in August, South Africa’s finance minister said the BRICS-based payment system would be aimed at strengthening trade in local currencies as opposed to the US dollar, but noted that it would not be a competitor to SWIFT. Brazil’s representative is also pushing hard for transactions between member states to use a common currency which would benefit everyone, not just the United States.

Analysts say the idea is a logical process in light of what is happening in the world. The United States is now a major fundraiser internationally, but it carries so much debt that it is unable to finance its own investments. The survival of the US economy is increasingly dependent on the flow of funds and investment from other countries – money that belongs to other countries and which could instead be invested domestically and contribute to the development of the internal needs of these nations, instead of being sent to the United States, where it is invested on the basis of “faith.” This belief is now slowly being eroded by Washington’s disastrous domestic and hawkish foreign policies. Essentially, Washington is actually encouraging other countries to invest in the United States and grow the American economy. But today this does not appear to be very much in the interests of the international community.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said at the plenary session of the International Olympiad on Financial Security that advanced technologies are now rapidly developing in the financial sector. These include digital currency, financial assets, and new payment services. In this area, especially when it comes to international

cooperation, it is extremely important to maintain mutual respect and trust in one's partners. The president cited cooperation between the central banks of Asia and the Middle East as a successful example of such relationships. He explained that their projects are protected from third party interference, that is, no state can block transactions or seize accounts, as is now happening in the modern world by the will of the declining United States.

BRICS, on the other hand, develops mutually beneficial relationships among many nations. Since China is BRICS' largest economy, it is also a major financial exporter, which allows it to provide assistance to other BRICS members. The BRICS members – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa – and the new invited members – Saudi Arabia, Iran, Ethiopia, Egypt and the UAE – do not necessarily have the same governance system. It is also true that there are also some disagreements between some members. However, what they have in common is interest in focusing on expanding their own national development rather than keeping their assets in the United States, a country that has proven itself to be an unreliable, selfish partner in recent decades.

Newly developing alliances and initiatives such as BRICS, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, or the Belt and Road Initiative, are literally a breath of fresh air for dozens of states that have either already become members of these organizations or have expressed interest in membership. Critics accuse the United States of “weaponizing” its dollar, as well as “weaponizing” the SWIFT payment system, which will sooner or later turn against Washington. In other words, the United States supplied the dollar along with arms supplies to push its course of brutal suppression of other countries and peoples. If the US had been neutral in its foreign economic policy, it would not now be facing any challenges, but the US could not do this, and the predatory nature of its “democracy” would not allow it. Washington used its dollar as a tool to force other countries to change their policies in line with the US or face severe punishment. The latest evidence of this is Washington's use of the war it launched in Ukraine against Russia to tie its satellites even closer to itself and force them to invest their capital in the United States.

There are a great many examples that show how the US dollar is both dangerous and a threat to international peace and security. Analysts accuse global financial institutions such as SWIFT, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund of serving only US interests. The weaponization of the SWIFT system and the US dollar are, in essence, unilateral US sanctions that affect not only those countries subject to America's illegal sanctions regimes. At the same time, they also affect international organizations that are subject to sanctions for violating unilateral US sanctions, but these organizations trade legally in accordance with international law, and the US does not take into account international law.

This is why experts say the issue is urgent, and it has been recognized by many in the international community, including US allies who are not talking about it publicly for fear of US backlash. It is BRICS that is considered by many in the world as one of the most important organizations to counter this American tyranny. Naturally, each country puts its own interests above all else, and at the same time, each country objects to Washington putting economic pressure on them to adjust their own foreign policy agendas. As a result, according to experts, it would be natural to move away from trading in US dollars, which would lead to closer and warmer relations between various countries and bring them additional benefits.

Experts argue that the process of de-dollarization will occur at some point, just as the British pound sterling was the world's reserve currency before the American dollar took its place. Nowadays, the United States has serious domestic and international problems due to interference in the affairs of other states, and confidence in the dollar is steadily declining. At the same time, America's national debt stands at least \$33 trillion and is growing every year, making investors increasingly skeptical about placing their investments in US Treasuries.

Russia has reportedly openly stated that BRICS is currently in discussions with members of the now highly influential organization to create its own answer to SWIFT. This would provide the alliance with another strong opportunity to create a multilateral world in which many countries around the globe are interested.

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To consolidate multipolarity, BRICS and the Global South have a shared interest in reconsidering their participation in the IMF and WTO

Mohamed Lamine Kaba

Strengthening multipolarity is essential for global balance. With this in mind, BRICS, as well as the nations of the Global South, would benefit from reconsidering their participation in the IMF and WTO.



This approach aims to promote greater autonomy and economic development aligned with their specific interests. Combining critical analysis and foresight, this article highlights the benefits of being able to navigate complex international contexts and promote innovative strategies for a multipolar future.

Within BRICS, the recent enlargement including Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia marks a crucial step towards strengthening the influence of emerging countries on the global economic and political scene. This dynamic raises the strategic question as to the advisability of detaching itself from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) in favour of increased multipolarity. The predominance of the United States within the IMF, illustrated by its veto power, contrasts with the minority representation of emerging countries, despite their significant demographic and economic weight. The

rigorous conditions of IMF loans, often uncorrelated with local realities, and high-interest rates have sometimes exacerbated debt crises, as in Africa and Latin America in the 1980s.

Faced with these challenges, economic autonomy and the creation of international financial institutions specific to BRICS present themselves as potential advantages of a possible departure. The departure in question will pose to the Western minority the risks of economic isolation and considerable loss of influence on world economic policies – the end of the status quo in the management of world affairs. An optimal strategy for BRICS and the Global South would therefore consist of completely withdrawing from the IMF and WTO, which serve as instruments of economic harassment, thus strengthening their influence while developing alternative structures to Western systems. This systemic approach would allow them to take advantage of their economic and demographic weight while working for a global system that is more balanced and representative of their interests.

BRICS+ challenges the dominance of Western powers in global governance structures

As a significant force advocating for a multipolar world order, BRICS, which now encompasses BRICS and BRICS+, has significant demographic, economic and military superiority. This coalition, representative of the majority of countries in the world, aims to challenge the predominance of Western powers within global governance structures, such as the World Bank (WB), the IMF and the WTO, whose doors should be slammed shut.

Historically, BRICS formed with the aim of establishing a more balanced global economic order with clear objectives, including the reform of international financial institutions to better reflect the realities of emerging markets. Their commitment to the creation of alternative institutions, such as the BRICS New Development Bank and the Contingency Reserve Arrangement underlines their determination to offer alternatives to Western-dominated financial systems, which, moreover, does not sit right with those nostalgic for unipolarity.

This is why abandoning the IMF and WTO could give BRICS countries greater autonomy and economic independence, as well as the ability to strengthen their own financial entities and constitute a powerful symbolic gesture in favour of a multipolar world order. Strategically, building coalitions with other emerging markets in the Global South can also strengthen the BRICS voice for global governance reforms without sacrificing the benefits of membership. Let us recall the fact that the countries of BRICS share the fact of being subjected, differently of course, to the diktat and,

therefore, to the domination of the Western world. This collective awareness offers ease of coordination of systemic integration policies, which could lead to the better performance of their national economies.

It can therefore be said that the idea of leaving the IMF and WTO is a direct way of consolidating multipolarity, in the sense that it offers excellent advantages for achieving broader goals of BRICS and the Global South. This strategy strengthens their position on the global economic stage. In short, turning our back on these economic instruments (IMF and WTO) of Western domination, while vigorously developing alternative institutions, could offer a more sustainable path towards achieving a balanced global order, multipolarity.

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The BRICS Games: the resurrection of the spirit of international sports

Ksenia Muratshina

The fifth BRICS Games were held in Kazan from June 12 to 23, 2024. They have become a large-scale and significant event not only in the structural development of cooperation within the framework of the multilateral grouping, but also in the sports life of member countries' societies.



A new direction of relations

Sport is a relatively new area of cooperation in BRICS. At multilateral negotiations and in joint declarations, states have repeatedly noted the need to expand humanitarian exchanges. Recently, sport has become an important part of them. The first joint sports event of the group took place in 2016, when India, during its presidency, hosted the BRICS football tournament for boys under the age of 17. Then, in 2017, China hosted competitions in three sports: volleyball, basketball and wushu. In 2018 South Africa continued, hosting football and volleyball tournaments. There were no BRICS Games in Brazil in 2019, only military-style multisport competitions.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought sports exchanges to a halt, but contacts continued. In 2020, the first meeting of ministers of sports of member-states was organized as a video conference. The parties signed a memorandum of cooperation, agreeing not only to hold regular competitions, but also on joint research, cooperation in the fight against doping and short-term exchanges of athletes and coaches in order to improve their qualifications. All face-to-face competitions were postponed, however, in 2022 the BRICS Games were moved to an online format: China held championships in chess, wushu and breakdancing. In addition, tournaments in a number of traditional national disciplines, including sambo and yoga, were held as a demonstration (outside the medal standings).

After the most severe years of the pandemic, the BRICS Games resumed in 2023 in South Africa, this time live. South Africa has made serious efforts to expand the scope of the tournament. Participation was as usual limited to representatives of the five founding countries (this time athletes below the age of 21, in some sports – below the age of 19), but the number of disciplines has grown significantly, with the list including swimming, badminton, beach volleyball, table tennis and tennis. The Paralympic teams also competed in the last two sports.

A global scale

In 2024, Russia managed to make the BRICS sports competitions truly global. As the chairman of BRICS and the organizer of the Games, our country decided to open up the status to all interested athletes from all over the world. The results of the Games speak to the success of this approach better than any statements: more than 3,000 athletes from 82 countries of Eurasia, Africa and Latin America took part in the competition. This is not only more than the number of BRICS and BRICS Plus countries, but it even exceeds all possible estimates of the number of states officially wishing to join the group. The performance of athletes from unfriendly countries (Great Britain, Japan, Switzerland, EU countries, South Korea) even despite the pressure from their governments is particularly noteworthy.

The programme of the Games also underwent significant changes and expanded to encompass 27 sports, including both Olympic and non-Olympic sports from national and traditional to completely new and modern ones. Athletics, swimming, rowing, equestrian sports, athletic and rhythmic gymnastics coexisted with sambo, acrobatic rock and roll, breakdancing, belt wrestling and other disciplines.

Another important difference from earlier BRICS competitions, which made the Kazan tournament more representative, spectacular and significant, was that adult professional athletes competed at the 2024 Games rather than juniors. Therefore, we can say that for the national teams of Russia and Belarus, the BRICS Games largely replaced the politicized and previously discredited Paris Olympics, and representatives of other states got a unique opportunity to compete fairly with the best Russian and Belarusian teams despite external sanctions.

Sports as they should be

The scale of the 2024 Games, their openness and accessibility directly correspond to the spirit of international sport as such. There were no biased restrictions, discriminatory measures, politicization in the organization of the event, in essence all that characterizes today's major sports tournaments coordinated in some way by the West. Strict, uniform and anti-doping rules were also applied.

In the autumn of 2023, speaking at the international forum 'Russia – a sports power', Russian President Vladimir Putin assured that "Russia is ready and will cooperate with all those who share traditional values and principles of sports, those who cherish these values". This is extremely important in an environment where the International Olympic Committee does not demand of athletes to achieve sporting results, rather demands anti-state and Russophobic political gestures, and the ordinary Olympic Games "can be used as an instrument of political pressure against people who have nothing to do with politics, and as rude, and in fact racist, ethnic discrimination". Today, in international organizations, "some sports officials have simply appropriated the right to determine who is covered by the Olympic Charter and who is not", although "such approaches contradict the very nature of sport". In his greeting to the participants of the BRICS Games at their opening ceremony on June 12, 2024, the Russian leader expressed confidence that this "sports festival will visibly demonstrate the triumph of the universal values of sport, equal opportunities and honest, uncompromising struggle".

This is exactly how it turned out. Amid double standards, sanctions and prejudices so prevalent in today's global sports community, the BRICS tournament has become a haven of genuine sporting spirit, healthy competition, cultural diversity, cooperation and fair play without restrictions and politicization. Russia gifted thousands of people a celebration, which was written and talked about in the world media for a long time.

At the same time, it should be understood that the role of each BRICS participant is important in holding the Games, because the organization of such a huge tournament had to be carefully thought out and logistics and many other working points have to be agreed upon. Therefore, the success of the competition is not only an achievement of Russia, but also an indicator of productively established international cooperation within BRICS at all its levels.

One would like to hope that the format of the updated Games introduced by our country will be continued by other BRICS states in the next cycles of presidency, and that their sports representation can grow because of new participants. This not only contributes to the development of multilateral humanitarian ties within the organization, but also provides interested athletes around the world with an honest, open and much-needed alternative to the current sports and political situation in the western part of the world.

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Pan-Africanism and the BRICS Alliance constitute two inseparable pillars to shape an emerging Global South

Mohamed Lamine Kaba

Pan-Africanism and the BRICS alliance represent two powerful forces that can help shape an emerging Global South. While Pan-Africanism promotes unity, solidarity and cooperation among African nations, the BRICS/BRICS+ alliance represents a group of emerging countries seeking to strengthen their economic and political influence on the international stage. Together, they can join forces to strengthen South-South cooperation, promote more equitable development, counter the hegemony of Western powers and encourage the emergence of new development paths.



This alliance can thus contribute to shaping a more united, stronger and more influential global South on the international scene, promoting peace, security and stability in the Southern regions and in the multipolar world. Like two unified twins, Pan-Africanism and the BRICS Alliance must marry to consolidate multipolarism.

For decades, the world scene has been marked by a profound transformation of the world order, with the emergence of new powers and the questioning of Western hegemony. Africa, a dynamic force with its demographic, economic and cultural potential, is at the heart of this transformation. Pan-Africanism, which advocates unity and solidarity among African nations, is growing in influence and relevance. At the same time, the BRICS alliance (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) is strengthening (BRICS+), seeking to promote a more multipolar and equitable world order. BRICS now represents a considerable economic, political and military force, capable of countering the influence of Western powers. It is in this context that the alliance between Pan-Africanism and BRICS takes on its full meaning, offering a unique opportunity for Africa and emerging countries to strengthen their cooperation, promote their development and redefine global balances of power. This is why the Alliance between Pan-Africanism and BRICS /BRICS+ represents a major turning point in global geopolitics, with considerable geostrategic issues. This dynamic alliance between Africa's quest for unity and development, embodied by Pan-Africanism, and the BRICS group of emerging countries, seeking to redefine the world order, creates a new pole of power and influence. The challenges are multiple: strengthening South-South cooperation, challenging Western hegemony, emergence of new development paths, and redefinition of global balances of power. This alliance has the potential to shape a new geopolitical landscape, with profound implications for global peace, security and sustainable development. But what are the geopolitical and geostrategic issues of this alliance? How will African and BRICS actors navigate this new landscape? What opportunities are available to them?

Geopolitical and geostrategic issues of the Pan-Africanism-BRICS Alliance couple

The alliance between Pan-Africanism and BRICS represents a historic opportunity for African and emerging countries to strengthen their cooperation, promote their development and redefine their place in the world order. This alliance helps create a space for South-South cooperation, where African and BRICS countries can share experiences, knowledge and resources to achieve common goals. It promotes the creation of a more equitable and sustainable development model, which takes into account the specificities and needs of countries in the South. This alliance also helps strengthen economic, political, military and cultural cooperation between African countries and BRICS, creating opportunities for partnership and cooperation in areas such as trade, investment, technology and education. In addition, this alliance contributes to promoting peace, security and stability in the Southern regions, by promoting conflict resolution and regional cooperation. It also encourages the

democratization of global governance, by giving a stronger voice to countries of the South in international institutions and by promoting greater representation and participation of African and emerging countries in global decision-making processes. This alliance represents an important step towards a fairer and more sustainable multipolar world, where African and emerging countries can play a larger and more influential role in the global order. It offers a unique opportunity for countries in the South to take control of their destiny and create a more prosperous and sustainable future for their people.

Will African and BRICS Alliance actors navigate this new multipolar landscape?

African and BRICS Alliance actors can navigate this new multipolar landscape by adopting common strategies to promote their interests and strengthen their cooperation. To this end, they can emphasize South-South cooperation, strengthening their own capacities, diversifying alliances and partnerships, and promoting economic diplomacy and regional cooperation. They can also use BRICS Alliance platforms, such as the New Development Bank and the BRICS Reserve Fund, to finance development projects and strengthen economic cooperation. From this perspective, African actors and those of the BRICS Alliance can work together to promote the reform of international institutions and strengthen the representation of Southern countries in global decision-making processes. In addition, they can emphasize cooperation in areas such as technology, energy, agriculture and security, to strengthen their self-reliance and resilience in the face of global challenges. African actors and those of the BRICS Alliance can thus navigate this multipolar landscape by adopting a collaborative and united approach, to promote a fairer and more sustainable world.

What opportunities are available to them?

As mentioned above, African and BRICS actors have the opportunity to strengthen South-South cooperation and promote more equitable and sustainable development. They can create new markets and economic opportunities, share knowledge and experiences to respond to global challenges, and promote the reform of international institutions. This cooperation can also help develop joint projects in areas such as infrastructure, energy, technology and agriculture, and strengthen economic, political and cultural ties between African countries and members of the BRICS Alliance. This is how this cooperation can contribute to promoting peace, security and stability in the regions concerned, and to strengthening the representation of countries of the South in

international institutions. This is a historic opportunity for African and BRICS actors to work together to, as noted above, create a more prosperous and sustainable future for their people.

In light of the above, we can deduce that the alliance between Pan-Africanism and the BRICS Alliance represents a historic opportunity for African countries and BRICS to strengthen their cooperation, promote their development and redefine their place in the global order. This alliance helps create a space for South-South cooperation, where African and BRICS countries can share experiences, knowledge and resources to achieve common goals. It also offers an opportunity for African countries and BRICS to promote a more equitable and sustainable development model, which takes into account the specificities and needs of the countries of the South. This alliance thus contributes to promoting peace, security and stability in the southern regions, by promoting conflict resolution and regional cooperation.

It can therefore be said that the marriage of Pan-Africanism to the BRICS Alliance is an important step towards a fairer and more sustainable multipolar world, where African countries and BRICS can play a larger and more influential role in the world order.

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Meeting with BRICS high-ranking security officials: a serious contribution to the fight against global threats

Alexandr Svaranc

Vladimir Putin met with BRICS high-ranking security officials at the Konstantinovsky Palace in St Petersburg. This is the 14th such forum held within the framework of BRICS.



The meeting in St Petersburg and the growing role of BRICS in international affairs

The latest meeting of security officials of the BRICS and BRICS+ countries was held in St Petersburg on September 10-12 this year. The first part of the meeting was attended by representatives of China, India, Brazil, Iran, Egypt, UAE, Ethiopia and South Africa. The second part was held in an expanded format, which was attended by Serbia, Belarus, Turkey, Iran, Mauritania, Laos, Vietnam, Venezuela, Bahrain, South Africa, Brazil, Nicaragua, UAE, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Cuba, Egypt and India. In total, representatives of 21 countries were present in the plenary hall.

The BRICS interstate association, which was launched in 2006 at the St Petersburg Economic Forum on the initiative of the leaders of Russia, India and China, is increasing its authority from year to year and is gaining global importance today. BRICS is a qualitatively new organization that acts as a flagship to form a multipolar world where relations are based on the principles of non-interference, equality and mutual benefit.

Today, BRICS accounts for 26.7% of the world's land surface (43,556,873km²) and 43.5% of the world's population (3.53 billion people); 43% of world oil production; 85% of world reserves of rare earth minerals; 28.1% of world GDP. The BRICS countries are characterized by rapidly developing economies. At the same time, they include three large (Russia, China, India) world nuclear powers. Accordingly, the geography and potential of the BRICS countries indicate their key participation in the formation of regional and global security architecture.

The St Petersburg meeting of the BRICS countries on security matters is remarkable because Russian President Vladimir Putin met with the forum participants at the Konstantinovsky Palace and held separate talks with representatives of China, India and Iran.

As Russian President Vladimir Putin noted in his address to forum participants, more than 30 (or rather 34, to be precise) states have already expressed their desire to join BRICS and develop cooperation in various formats. This trend, of course, confirms the indisputable fact of the viability of BRICS as a new type of international organization, testifies to the growing interest in it and requires improving the quality of its activities.

Agenda and initiatives of the St Petersburg forum

Security issues remain key in the global system and in the context of current military and political crises in Europe and the Middle East simmering hotbeds of conflict in the heart of Asia and other parts of the world, a systematic approach to ensuring security and peace at the national, regional and global levels is gaining priority.

The issues of combating terrorism, separatism, drug trafficking, corruption, cybercrime and other threats of common interest, as well as the formation of a sustainable concept of mutually beneficial cooperation between BRICS countries, became the topic of discussion in this sphere.

During the meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, President Vladimir Putin stressed that Moscow and Beijing are defending the principles of a just world, and on the path to achieve this justice, the world community must defend, first of all, strengthening security.

The Russian leader drew the attention of the BRICS high-ranking security officials to the collective results of joint work (including the creation of a special electronic register for the exchange of information on computer attacks and incidents), the expediency of forming a council to combat the financing of terrorism and money laundering.

The forum participants came up with a number of important new organizational and substantive initiatives, designed to enhance mutually beneficial partnership of the BRICS countries in the field of strengthening security and respect for mutual interests. Thus, as part of the anti-corruption effort, the Russian side proposed common approaches of the BRICS countries to combating bribery and recovering assets and income derived from illegal criminal activities, which was approved by partners.

Among the noteworthy initiatives of the forum participants is the proposal of Iran (representative of the Supreme Leader of Iran Ayatollah Khamenei and Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council of Iran Ali Akbar Ahmadian) on the expediency of creating a special collective institute on security issues within the framework of BRICS, particularly the BRICS Security Commission.

Such a structure is obviously necessary for such a serious organization in order to develop common principles and concepts of cooperation in global and regional security at the external level, as well as in the context of an internal mechanism to eliminate tensions between BRICS member states (for example, in relations between China and India, Iran and Saudi Arabia, etc.).

At the meeting in St Petersburg, the BRICS countries discussed forms of interaction in the face of geopolitical challenges that could escalate into armed conflicts. The representative of India, National Security Adviser to the Prime Minister of India Ajit Doval, in his speech cited an example of the popular expression in his country, ‘the whole world is one big family’, which for BRICS countries means not idealizing the situation, but striving to move in the paradigm of common efforts in security and overcoming modern challenges in a timely manner.

In this context, Serbia’s interest in BRICS is indicative. Thus, the representative of Belgrade, Deputy Prime Minister Aleksandar Vulin, at the meeting in St Petersburg, stated that EU pressure on the issue of Kosovo and Metohija could force Serbia to join BRICS. “For Serbia, BRICS is a chance and a real alternative to the EU, which does not require anything in return, but can offer more,” Vulin stressed.

In addressing pressing issues, the high representatives of the St Petersburg meeting of the BRICS countries also discussed the peaceful settlement of the Russian-Ukrainian crisis. Indian Representative Doval, at a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, reported on the details of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s meeting with the head of the Kiev regime, Vladimir Zelensky.

During meetings with high representatives of the BRICS countries on security issues, Vladimir Putin thanked all colleagues for their fruitful joint work and asked them to convey good wishes and an invitation to the leaders of their countries to the organization's summit in Kazan on October 22-24.

During the meetings with representatives of China, India and Iran, the parties confirmed the high level of relations between our countries, discussed topical issues of cooperation and prospects for their growth. Naturally, a considerable part of the issues (especially in the field of security) remained behind 'closed doors' for objective reasons. However, the fact remains that the West will no longer be able to impose its dictate on the rest of the world because the agenda of active and equal cooperation between the countries of the Global South and the East is expanding.

BRICS security meeting develops the tradition of cooperation between the Global South and the East

The forum in St Petersburg has become the latest development in the tradition of BRICS summits to discuss issues of ensuring national, regional and international security, as well as areas of interaction between the participating countries of this organization. Most of the meeting was held behind closed doors. The official materials note that the following issues were discussed: the parameters of the future world order; overcoming the order imposed by the West based on the rules of dictate; the development of multipolarity; coordination of actions in the conditions of confrontation and unpredictability in world affairs.

As the Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation, Sergei Shoigu, noted, such meetings in an expanded format are becoming a good tradition for interaction between the Global South and the East.

Alexander Svarants, PhD of Political Science, Professor

SEA-BRICS: extending the new system of international cooperation

Ksenia Muratshina

At the end of May, Thailand officially announced its intention to become a member of BRICS. The international grouping, which has become a kind of symbol of the movement towards the multipolarity of the world, is currently experiencing a real wave of expansion. In addition to its ‘core’ (Russia, Brazil, India, China and the Republic of South Africa), Iran, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Ethiopia and Egypt have also become its participants since January 1, 2024, and the prospects for expanding membership to the group do not end there.



Not an organization, but a system

Today, BRICS is an international structure of a rather atypical pattern. Having neither a charter nor permanent bodies, except for the New Development Bank (NDB) – which, by the way, is more correct to consider not a BRICS body, but a separate international association – it is, in fact, not an international organization. At the same time, it is becoming increasingly difficult to label it just a forum whose activities are

not legally binding. BRICS is increasing the number of diverse formats of multilateral cooperation in all areas: from trade to humanitarian, from ties between political parties to the interaction of emergency response services. These ties are becoming permanent and there is a classic expansion of international integration not only in depth, but also in breadth. The interactions between states are becoming more and more systematic, and the openness of the various BRICS formats attracts new and potential future participants.

At the same time, the group's work objectively lacks supranational coercion, limitations of sovereignty, imposition of development models, obligations to accept foreign norms and values, i.e. everything that the world is used to seeing in most existing international organizations created according to the Western model.

As the initiator of creation of the group in the days of the RIC and BRIC formats, Russia has put in a large effort to build the grouping throughout its existence. In the words of Russian President Vladimir Putin, BRICS has managed to ensure that such a partnership “not only makes a significant contribution to ensuring the sustainable growth of states, but also generally contributes to improving the global economy and successfully achieving the UN sustainable development goals” and the group itself acts as a “magnet that attracts a lot of countries”.

Throughout its history, the grouping has significantly evolved, and today it has taken on an updated and modern form. Due to the forum type of interaction and the interests of participants and their individual vision of integration prospects not always coincide, this created objective risks of fragility and non-obligation to cooperation. Today, however, having withstood the serious test of time because of the commonality of participants' main positions, consistency and diversification of contacts, BRICS is an example of the successful development of interregional relations between states from different parts of the world, which, nevertheless, share common values and the desire for development in a multipolar environment.

«Plus» and «outreach»

Shortly after the initial composition of the group was finalized, i.e. after South Africa joined in 2011, BRICS began to build contacts with external partners. Since 2013, meetings with the heads of states from the region of the chair country have been on the agenda. In 2015 Russia managed to implement a new format of interregional contacts by organizing a meeting of BRICS leaders and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. In 2017 China held a BRICS Plus meeting, bringing together a number of countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America (Egypt, Thailand, Tajikistan, Guinea and Mexico), which it considered necessary to include in the discussion of certain issues. The

aforementioned countries were among Beijing's usual economic partners, but the trend towards engagement through the BRICS Plus dialogue was further modified and developed, contributing to the expansion of the group's external relations as an international structure.

The growing number of countries interested in cooperation with BRICS has contributed to the diversification of formats for external relations. Since 2018, BRICS has been holding both regional meetings (which received the name 'BRICS Outreach' during the South African presidency) and meetings with representatives of the "Global South", who are chosen and invited by the chair country ('BRICS Plus'). From that moment on, the approach to the selection of BRICS Plus participants was formalized; the leaders of the Global South, the states that headed various regional associations, and the chairs of international organizations were invited to the dialogue. In 2023, with the growing number of those wishing to join the association, South Africa put into practice a new format, i.e. 'Friends of BRICS' (it included countries officially preparing to join the BRICS), and held meetings at the level of foreign ministers and representatives from the security sphere.

Every state finds something of interest in BRICS; there are countries for which BRICS is, first and foremost, a symbol of a multipolar world and opposition to the hegemonic ambitions of the United States and the West, a similar vision of current threats to international security, "an alternative system of international relations based on respect for the sovereignty of states". There are those who are primarily interested in strengthening economic cooperation with BRICS member states and international South-South relations generally. Some are counting on borrowing from the BRICS New Development Bank, some on BRICS participation in solving global problems of the world economy, while others are striving for de-dollarisation, trading in national currencies and (the unlikely, but desired by many) introduction of a possible BRICS single currency to simplify internal turnover. Some are also attracted by a common desire to reform pro-Western global financial institutions and the opposition to neo-colonial traditions in their various guises, others by high rates of economic development of the participating countries, equal interstate communication without 'sanctions and counter-sanctions' and the opportunity to change the world order towards a "more democratic" one.

Prospects for Southeast Asia

In 2023, a total of 65 states were involved in BRICS events. The members of the grouping and its various formats represent all regions of the world and Southeast Asia

(SEA) are no exception. Thailand, as mentioned, became the first Southeast Asian country to officially announce its desire to join BRICS.

In addition, Vietnam, Indonesia, Laos and Myanmar have also expressed (to varying degrees) their opinion on the possibility of participating in BRICS. Southeast Asian countries have also managed to gain experience in participating in events in the BRICS Plus format in recent years. There are those who have not yet expressed their direct intention to join the grouping, but have interacted with it in one way or another in the international arena, for example Cambodia, which was to chair the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) at the BRICS Plus meeting in 2022. Cambodia advocated for the development of ASEAN ties with the group and Malaysia, which also has experience in BRICS Plus contacts, expressed its interest in developing cooperation with BRICS for example in space exploration.

In general, today, the states of the region are gradually looking towards BRICS. Their attention to it follows the principle of multi-vector foreign policy and is likely to intensify.

* * *

The technical details of further BRICS expansion are still being worked out, however the main thing to note is the current trend towards increasing interregional representation in the grouping. In comparison to many other international associations, BRICS is a fairly open structure. According to Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, around 30 countries have expressed their interest in joining BRICS. The possible emergence of a new category of ‘BRICS partner countries’, which was announced by the head of the Russian Foreign Ministry, will help gradually involve all interested parties in the work of the grouping.

Both during the period of its presidency and otherwise, Russia has been actively involved in the development of BRICS, aimed at providing as many states as possible with the opportunity to participate in this new type of international grouping. Among events involving BRICS Plus countries held in recent months are the launch of the League of BRICS-Plus Foundations to support innovation, the International Park Forum, the ‘Spirit of Fire Film Festival’ and the BRICS conference ‘on the way to a global centre of power’ and the youth music festival ‘BRICS: young winds’. The motto of the Russian presidency in 2024 is “Strengthening multilateralism for equitable global development and security”. In the future, BRICS not only plans to develop cooperation within the BRICS Plus format, but also to build stable and mutually beneficial ties with SCO, CIS and EAEU. The grouping has sufficient experience in

multilateral contacts to continue inviting new partners to cooperate and take reciprocal steps in response to interest in joint work by like-minded states.

It is safe to say that BRICS has gradually evolved from a predominantly political forum into a new, large-scale system of international dialogue and cooperation in various fields. The fact that it attracts participants from all regions of the world, including Southeast Asia, is a positive sign. A reflection on the prospects of the international system and, in general, the fate of civilization in the world is now being considered more actively and the ideas of multipolarity, equal cooperation and choosing one's own path of development in accordance with national interests will naturally resonate with an increasingly wide range of people and states around the world.

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Prospects for Nigeria's accession to BRICS

Mikhail Gamandiy-Egorov

Nigeria is considering the possibility of joining BRICS, Nigerian Foreign Minister's statement says. What are the prospects in this regard for one of the main forces of the African continent and for BRICS, in its updated composition? If on the one hand, there is a number of factors in favor of Nigeria's candidacy, a number of other points should be resolved first, which would then make this candidacy clearly positive for the international multipolar organization.



It is worth noting that Yusuf Tuggar, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Nigeria, announced his country's willingness to apply to join the BRICS alliance during his official visit to Russia at the time when our country presides over one of the main international structures of the multipolar world order, currently composed, in addition to the Russian Federation, of other large and influential states on a global, regional and continental scale – namely China, India, Brazil, South Africa, Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

During his recent visit, the Nigerian Foreign Minister highlighted several important points, which concern both Abuja's relations with Moscow, and his country's motivation to join BRICS. Thus, Yusuf Tuggar recalled the long-standing military and defense cooperation between Russia and Nigeria. He also said that his country appreciates the enormous support and solidarity of the Russian Federation with the Nigerian government under the leadership of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu. The Nigerian Foreign Minister also reaffirmed Nigeria's commitment to diplomatic and economic relations with Russia, insisting that the Nigerian state is committed to strengthening diplomatic and bilateral relations with Moscow.

He also stressed the importance that Nigeria attaches to its relations with the Russian Federation, reaffirming that Russia remains an important ally and strategic partner for his country, particularly in the fight against terrorism. When speaking about military and defense cooperation, Yusuf Tuggar praised the support and assistance of the Russian government in sharing intelligence, which contributed to the fight against terrorism and rebellion in Nigeria. The sides also discussed joint economic projects in which, according to Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, Russia intends to strengthen its presence. This includes nuclear energy with the participation of the Russian State Atomic Energy Corporation (Rosatom) and facilitating further financing and implementing the Ajaokuta Steel Company Limited project (large steel plant located in the town of Ajaokuta, in Kogi State, south-central Nigeria) and relaunching the aluminum company AC Rusal in the country.

With regard to BRICS and the multilateral format Yusuf Tuggar said that in addition to Nigeria's already mentioned desire to join the main international organization promoting the multipolar world order, Nigeria is not abandoning its ambitions to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council.

Specifically regarding BRICS, what are Nigeria's chances and prospects of being invited to join the alliance?

A number of important points should be noted here. On the one hand, a number of factors clearly speak in favor of accepting Nigerian candidacy into BRICS. The West African country is a leading demographic force on the African continent, with a population of more than 220 million people. Economically, it is the second power in Africa (after Egypt) in terms of GDP at purchasing power parity (GDP-PPP), as well as in terms of nominal GDP. The country is also a major energy powerhouse, among the world's twenty largest oil and gas producers. As for military power, Nigeria is among the five main African forces. Nigeria is on the whole clearly one of the main powers on the African continent.

As for the interest within the BRICS alliance, Nigeria, if accepted, would then become the fourth African country to join the organization (after South Africa, Egypt and Ethiopia), which would certainly further strengthen the already strategic relations between BRICS and Africa, as well as the weight of BRICS itself, having among its members the main powers of the African continent, not forgetting the energy aspect, where the BRICS countries already occupy a significant share of the global energy market.

However, the Nigerian bid also has several nuances that will certainly require a balanced approach before the bid is approved. In addition to the strong influence of Western interests in the country, particularly Anglo-Saxon one, Nigeria has adopted a very ambiguous position towards the authorities of the countries of the Alliance of Sahel States (Alliance des Etats du Sahel, AES), even being at one point a supporter of direct military intervention against neighboring Niger, with the aim of overthrowing the new national authorities and re-imposing the country's former president, a protégé of the West, Mohamed Bazoum. This event had severely damaged Nigeria's reputation in the region among the majority of citizens of the AES countries, and generally among supporters of Pan-African values and a multipolar world. There were also many citizens of Nigeria who did not support this approach.

At the same time Nigerian authorities could have drawn a certain number of right conclusions from this situation. If this is the case, Nigeria can certainly be considered a very serious candidate for the continued expansion of BRICS, within the framework of the modern multipolar world order.

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How Pakistan Could Benefit from BRICS Membership?

Abbas Hashemite

The 15th BRICS summit held in Johannesburg, South Africa on August 23, 2023 garnered significant attention, as partnerships and alliances play a crucial role in shaping the contours of geopolitics. BRIC was established in 2006 by four member states including Brazil, Russia, China, and India. However, the inclusion of South Africa in 2011 resulted in the expansion of the organization for the first time, and it was renamed as BRICS.



John O'Neill, an economist at Goldman Sachs, proposed the idea of BRIC for the first time in 2001. Goldman Sachs predicted that the economies of the emerging markets of the four-member countries will dominate the global economy by 2050. BRICS emerged as a significant economic and political bloc.

The summit of BRICS in Johannesburg caught significant attention throughout the world because it explored the idea of introducing an alternative unified currency for trade among the member countries. This initiative possesses the potential to challenge the US-led world. The BRICS countries have a combined GDP of more than that of the G7 countries. Member countries of the organization are also responsible for more than 26 percent of global GDP. Moreover, the BRICS embodies 41 percent of the world population, collectively. In addition, at the International Monetary Fund, the member states hold 15 percent of the voting power. In pursuit of changing the US-led world order and giving more say to the Global South, the forum has opened itself for further expansion. Five new members, including Egypt, KSA, UAE, Iran and Ethiopia have been added to BRICS in its 15th summit. The interest of around 40 other countries in the membership of BRICS demonstrates the burgeoning significance of the organization at the global level.

The rationale of BRICS is predicated on the South-South collaboration and increasing the influence of emerging economies throughout the world. However, China and India are at odds over the idea of expanding BRICS. The specter of being rejected by Pakistan's membership request by India haunts the policymakers of the former. Therefore, it has not made any formal request to join the group. Pakistan's membership in BRICS could impinge India's strategic interests. The latter has positioned itself to counter China's hegemony within the organization, which could be disrupted by Pakistan's inclusion.

Pakistan's leadership and policymakers do not only need to consider the potential economic benefits but also consider diplomatic implications. The country is deliberating seriously on the prospects of joining the bloc. The economic benefits of joining BRICS, for Pakistan, seem to outweigh the challenges posed by gaining its membership. The country could mitigate its dependence on the United States for trade, as the BRICS memberships would open new ventures for Pakistan to diversify its trade. The bloc has established two institutions, the Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA) and the New Development Bank (NDB), to support the members economically, which holds grave importance. The former is supposed to assist the member states in overcoming the challenges of the short-term balance of payment, as it holds a capital base of over 100 bn USD. On the other hand, the NDB provides funding to the BRICS members without stringent conditions, unlike the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Pakistan is a staunch advocate of a multipolar world. The BRICS membership would position it alongside other states that share similar ideologies. Pakistan's alliance with emerging economies is imperative for its prosperity. The country already enjoys cordial relations with some of the member states of BRICS. China and Pakistan already hold strong ties due to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Pakistan and Russia have also reevaluated their foreign policy outlook to each other in the recent past due to changing regional and global dynamics. Moreover, Russia can help Pakistan in reaching the Central Asian markets, which can bolster the latter's trade and economy. It is also providing arms and weapons to Pakistan along with cheap oil to meet the country's economic, energy, and defense needs. Saudi Arabia and Pakistan also enjoy cordial bilateral relations, as the former has bolstered the latter's balance of payments numerously through its investments. The BRICS membership will further these relations with Pakistan. It can also reach the markets of Brazil and South Africa by joining this bloc. Likewise, Pakistan enjoys good relations with other BRICS members. However, India is the only country that can object to Pakistan's BRICS membership. Pakistan needs to take a prudent foreign policy towards India to create an atmosphere of mutual benefit and cooperation.

A huge share of Pakistan's trade is connected within the BRICS framework, which underlines the significance of the bloc for the country's trade. Almost 35.2 percent of total imports of Pakistan were from the BRICS countries, while Pakistan's exports to these countries accounted for 11.1 percent in the year 2021. Pakistan can rationalize its foreign policy goal of shifting from geopolitics to geo-economics, as BRICS would open multiple new ventures for Pakistan. Globally, the country continues to struggle with its hard image due to extremism and terrorism. The BRICS membership will assist the country in elevating its image at the global level by forming trade-based relations with member countries. It would also lead Pakistan towards the formulation of an independent foreign policy by decreasing its reliance on Western institutions and the United States. However, to overcome the obstacles in joining BRICS, Pakistan must undertake prudent foreign policy decisions to address the concerns of other members diplomatically and establish cordial relations with India. The country would also have to balance its relations with Europe and the United States through shrewd diplomacy. It should also broaden its tax base, implement governance reforms, and increase its exports to build a strong case while applying for the BRICS membership. Joining BRICS will ensue economic prosperity and well-being for Pakistan, as the bloc is poised to become a strong pillar of global growth in the future. The country should deliberate seriously on the prospects of joining the bloc to benefit from its expanding clout.

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Turkey and BRICS: Why is the West Nervous About This Idea?

Ricardo Martins

Erdoğan's interest in joining BRICS reflects Turkey's desire to diversify its geopolitical alliances while also testing the limits of its ability to balance between two different systems.



Turkey's Bet on BRICS: Why Now?

Turkey's interest in joining BRICS stems from several reasons, primarily rooted in its geopolitical ambitions. The country is frustrated with its stalled EU accession process, which has seen little progress over the past few decades. Moreover, Turkey seeks to diversify its alliances, reduce its reliance on the West, and strengthen ties with emerging powers like China, Russia, and India.

This bid aligns with its goal of pursuing an independent foreign policy, particularly after strained relations with NATO and ongoing tensions with Western allies due to Turkey's engagement with Russia.

Turkey's long wait to join the European Union, which began in the 1960s, has been justified by the EU on the grounds of political, economic, and human rights concerns, along with geopolitical tensions, particularly regarding Cyprus. However, former French president Nicolas Sarkozy (2007-2012) expressed opposition and the real reasons why Turkey could not join the European Union, stating it as a France's red line, because of Turkey's cultural and geographic differences, particularly its predominantly Muslim identity, made it unsuitable for EU membership. In place of full EU membership, he advocated for a "privileged partnership" with Turkey, citing concerns over European identity and cohesion. Former German Chancellor Angela Merkel backed Sarkozy with the same arguments, stating that Germany's attempt to create a multicultural society had "utterly failed".

Turkey's membership will strengthen BRICS' geopolitical clout, challenging the current world order dominated by the West.

The EU's response to Turkey's BRICS application was formal but hinted at potential future contradictions: "We expect all EU candidate countries to firmly and unequivocally support EU values, respect obligations arising from relevant trade agreements, and align with the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy."

Turkey's EU accession bid is at a standstill, with the country placed at the bottom of the bloc's priority list, behind Balkan candidates as well as behind Moldova and Ukraine. This has led Turkey to seek other economic and geopolitical partnerships, with BRICS emerging as a natural choice.

Additionally, Turkey's recent efforts to improve relations with the West, in order to secure financial support for its economic issues, were met with Western demands to reduce its economic ties with Russia.

By joining BRICS, which represents around 40% of the global population and 28% of the world's GDP, Turkey can reap benefits in various areas, including economic diversification, alternative financing, and geopolitical influence.

BRICS Means Economic and Financial Diversification for Turkey

Turkey's move to join BRICS offers substantial opportunities for economic diversification, a critical advantage as the country would gain privileged access to more

dynamic global markets. BRICS members are strategically located across South America, Africa, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and Asia.

One of the major benefits Turkey could gain from the BRICS membership is access to the group's financial institutions, particularly the New Development Bank (NDB). This institution can provide alternative financing options for Turkey's ambitious infrastructure and development projects, particularly in the transport and energy sectors, helping to ease its current economic challenges. This would reduce Turkey's dependence on Western financial systems, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which is often seen as politically restrictive.

As a BRICS member, Turkey could also engage in the bloc's ongoing efforts to reduce dependence on the US dollar, aligning with BRICS discussions on de-dollarisation. This would offer Turkey new financial alternatives, payment mechanisms, and trade routes, increasing its economic sovereignty and potentially shielding it from future Western sanctions.

In terms of sanctions, Western suppliers are currently causing issues in the completion of Turkey's nuclear power plant, being built by Russia's Rosatom, as the German government is blocking Siemens from delivering relevant parts. This issue is being resolved with supplies from China.

Finally, as a BRICS member, Turkey could wield more influence in global governance structures and align with nations pushing for a more multipolar world, which aligns with Erdoğan's foreign policy objectives.

Benefits for BRICS from Turkey's Membership

In return, BRICS could also benefit from having Turkey as a member. Here are three key reasons: (i) Strategic location: Turkey's geographical position as a bridge between Europe and Asia would enhance BRICS' influence in Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East. Notably, Istanbul, as the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire and later the Ottoman Empire, was considered the crossroads of the world (the centre of the world) for more than a thousand years; (ii) Economic boost: Turkey's economy, one of the largest in the region, would add weight to BRICS in terms of both GDP and regional power; and (iii) South-South cooperation: Turkey, with its sovereign and bold diplomacy, would strengthen intra-BRICS cooperation, contributing to a more balanced global order that is less reliant on Western powers.

US, EU, and NATO Reactions

The EU and the United States are uneasy about Turkey's potential shift towards BRICS. Both fear that Turkey's involvement with BRICS signals a departure from traditional Western alliances, especially NATO, which could weaken their influence in the region.

The EU is particularly disappointed with Turkey's shift in priorities regarding its membership bid. While Erdoğan has not explicitly stated that he wishes to withdraw Turkey's EU candidacy, no country has outright rejected the possibility of joining the EU. However, many people in Istanbul feel that Turkey should withdraw its candidacy, as they believe they have been sidelined by the EU and their national pride and historical greatness cannot accept such humiliation. The EU is also concerned about the future of its partnerships with Turkey, especially in managing refugees and migrants.

The US views Turkey's alignment with BRICS as a challenge to NATO's cohesion, especially given that Russia, a key BRICS member, is in direct conflict with Western interests. Turkey's growing ties with Russia, through initiatives such as the purchase of the Russian S-400 anti-missile system, have already strained its relationship with NATO and caused friction with the US over defence cooperation.

For NATO, Turkey's move towards BRICS could cause additional internal divisions. NATO members may start to question Turkey's loyalty to the alliance, particularly since BRICS members like Russia and China are seen as adversaries to NATO's strategic goals. NATO's efforts are currently focused on countering China in the Indo-Pacific and over Taiwan. Turkey's shift could undermine its role within NATO, leading to reduced cooperation or even isolating Turkey from critical defence initiatives.

Turkey could also face economic and political drawbacks from the West. The US and the EU might impose sanctions or limit defence and trade agreements, which could have significant economic repercussions for Turkey. Additionally, Ankara risks becoming diplomatically isolated from Western powers, losing leverage on important regional issues such as Syria, the Mediterranean, and its relations with the broader Middle East. Turkey's traditional balancing act between East and West may ultimately strain relations with both sides.

Geopolitical Implications for the New World Order

Regardless, Turkey's inclusion in BRICS would reflect a broader shift towards a multipolar world order, where emerging economies seek to counterbalance Western dominance. The US is particularly concerned about this alignment, as BRICS has been critical of Western financial hegemony, especially the dominance of the US dollar. The United States cannot afford the end of the dollar's hegemony, as, in that case, their decline as a global hegemonic power would be even faster. Turkey's membership would strengthen BRICS' geopolitical influence, challenging the current world order dominated by the West.

Turkey's bid to join BRICS, therefore, represents a strategic shift in the global geopolitical landscape, particularly because Turkey is a NATO member and occupies a strategic location, including control over access to the Black Sea.

Conclusion

Turkey's desire to join BRICS signals its ambition to play a more influential role in a multipolar world. This move could redefine Turkey's position within NATO, complicate relations with the EU, and elevate its status within global governance frameworks. For BRICS, Turkey's membership would solidify its growing influence, while the West, especially NATO and the US, would face even greater challenges in keeping Turkey fully aligned with Western interests.

In Erdoğan's view, aligning with BRICS allows Turkey to strengthen economic ties with rapidly growing emerging markets and gain greater global influence. Erdoğan sees BRICS as a potential counterbalance to Western dominance in international affairs, particularly in financial and political institutions. Turkey's membership would bring economic benefits, such as increased trade and investment opportunities with BRICS nations, along with access to new financial structures like the New Development Bank (NDB), which could help alleviate some of Turkey's current economic challenges.

Turkey's possible membership in BRICS not only reflects its desire for diversified alliances but also its pursuit of a more prominent role in the emerging multipolar world, as Erdoğan tests the limits of his ability to balance between two global systems.

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More like-minded people: results of the Moscow BRICS Media Summit

Ksenia Muratshina

The 7th BRICS Media Forum, which for the first time ever received the status of a summit, was held from September 14 to 16 in Moscow. The meetings were attended by representatives of the largest media of the countries and those states that express interest in the group and intend to join it.



‘Plus’ format

The most important feature of the forum was its BRICS Plus format, i.e. open to all interested countries and not only those that have officially joined BRICS. As a result, representatives of Venezuela, Thailand, Indonesia, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Malaysia, Vietnam, Laos, Cuba, Myanmar and many other countries arrived in Moscow. In total, more than 45 countries sent their representatives and the number of media representatives – news agencies, newspapers, TV channels, media corporations – was 60, the total number of guests – 150 speakers and panellists.

The meeting in Moscow was fundamentally different from the previous BRICS media dialogues held since 2015 in terms of scale and the level of discussions. Representatives of ministries, heads of media structures, diplomats and employees of international organisations gathered at the World Trade Centre. Considering the importance and level of representation of the meeting, the participation of heads of the leading media structures in their countries, the current Media Forum, held in the year of Russia's BRICS presidency and organised by Russia, received the status of a summit for the first time.

On air and on the side-lines

The forum's programme also corresponded to the status of a summit in terms of content and relevance of the topics raised. During two working days, participants managed to discuss such topics as cooperation between the information communities of BRICS countries, exchange of experience in the field of new technologies, combating disinformation, information security, countering external pressure, information fact checking, promising areas of multilateral relations, training of journalists and their protection from persecution, global challenges and the responsibility of journalism in the modern era, the quantitative growth of content sharing and much more.

A large number of cooperation agreements between the media of BRICS and BRICS Plus countries were signed on the side-lines of the forum. In addition, a round table "Let there be Russian information space" of the World Association of Russian Press and a meeting of representatives of Caspian news agencies were held.

Cultural programme of the forum

Before the start of the sessions, the 'BRICS Family' photo exhibition opened at the World Trade Centre, presenting the works of leading photographers from countries of the association. At the end of the business programme, the guests of the Media Summit were able to visit the opera 'Prince Igor' at the Bolshoi Theatre, staged by the director of the theatre and the artistic director of the Mariinsky Theatre, People's Artist of the Russian Federation Valery Gergiev.

Directions and ideas for developing cooperation

Results of the Media Summit were fixed in a joint declaration. Participants pledged to “promote, through their information resources, a just and equitable multipolar world order based on the norms of international law and the principles of equality, respect for sovereignty, non-interference in internal affairs and indivisible security”, “to promote comprehensive coverage on their resources of interaction within the framework of BRICS and BRICS Plus mechanisms, including political, economic and humanitarian areas”. The “commitment to the principles of objective, fact-based journalism” and the “willingness to coordinate efforts to combat disinformation” were also clearly defined. In addition, the parties called on the international community to respect the rights of journalists and ensure their safety, noting that “the use of artificial intelligence in the media requires development of appropriate standards and ethical norms” and agreeing to maintain a professional dialogue on the topic of artificial intelligence. In the future, countries intend to “continue working together within the framework of global and regional alliances”.

Many important remarks and ideas were made at the forum. Here are just a few of them: Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov announced a key event of the Russian BRICS presidency, namely the upcoming summit of the association in Kazan, and expressed hope that “the media will make a significant and tangible contribution to the objective coverage of the summit”.

Bella Cherkesova, Deputy Minister of Digital Development, Communications and Mass Media of the Russian Federation, spoke in favor of strengthening cooperation between the media of the BRICS countries in terms of strengthening “personal contacts”.

Maria Zakharova, Director of the Department of Information and Press of the Russian MFA, called BRICS an example of interstate interaction in the modern world and recalled that the group “does not seek to create new dividing lines based on bloc thinking”, but follows the principles of equality, synergy, dialogue, openness, consensus, NS respect for the path of development chosen by states, consideration of each other’s interests. According to the official representative of the Russian MFA, the media summit on this scale should become regular. In the modern world, the support of like-minded people is especially valuable. Strengthening BRICS cooperation in the information sphere should include support for cooperation between editorial offices, departments, NGOs, simplification of mutual accreditation, exchange of experience, mutual assistance in the legal distribution of materials and stimulation of positive blogging activity. The Russian diplomat also drew the attention of the audience to the attacks that Russian journalists are subjected to in the West and called for countering this lawlessness: “Our silence is unacceptable. Everything that is happening these days

with Russian journalists and Russian media structures, the attacks that the collective West is making on them, can happen to each of you, whether you are the head of a corporation, the editor-in-chief or an ordinary correspondent abroad. Silence is unacceptable, because, among other things, it is a sign of agreement with such an attitude to freedom of speech, to the safety of journalism, to the values that make up the ethics of this profession”.

CEO of TASS Andrey Kondrashov called on BRICS media outlets to share their experience in technical ways of combatting the spread of fakes and noted that BRICS, the media of the group’s members states and events such as the Media Summit “ensure genuine freedom of speech” and “an objective picture of what is happening” in the context of the formation of a multipolar world.

Timofey Vi, Head of the Strategic Directions Department at Dialog Regions, mentioned the analysis of hostile information campaigns, the risks of the dominance of global IT platforms in the media environment and the experience of countering disinformation, which his organisation is ready to share with colleagues.

Information Minister of Myanmar, Maung Maung, announced Myanmar’s desire to expand cooperation with BRICS countries and spoke about media cooperation with Russia, including plans to produce joint television series.

The Director General of the Union of Information Agencies of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, Muhammad bin Abd Rabbo al-Yami, pointed out that this agency advocates for strengthening cooperation with BRICS to “achieve a balance between information flows, forming information content that respects spiritual and cultural values” and “jointly countering fake news”.

Jose Juan Sanchez, CMA Group President (media holding from Brazil), is confident that BRICS countries will be able to establish mutually beneficial cooperation in “conducting trainings for the media, exchanging best practices, identifying problems and challenges and discussing strategies”.

The list of speakers included Vladislav Fronin, Editor-in-Chief of Rossiyskaya Gazeta, Nomsa Chabeli, Group Chief Executive Officer of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), Fu Hua, CEO of Xinhua, Jamal Mohammed al-Kaabi, CEO of the Emirates News Agency, Nur-ul Afida Kamaludin, CEO of the Malaysian Bernama Agency, Pratyush Ranjan, Head of the Digital Technologies, Multimedia and Verification Department at the Indian PTI, Director of Public Relations and Strategic Partnership at the Ethiopian News Agency, Johannes Vondirad, Mohammad Sarfi, Editor-in-Chief of Tehran Times, Mercedes Elena Chasin Diaz, Director of the Ciudad Caracas newspaper.

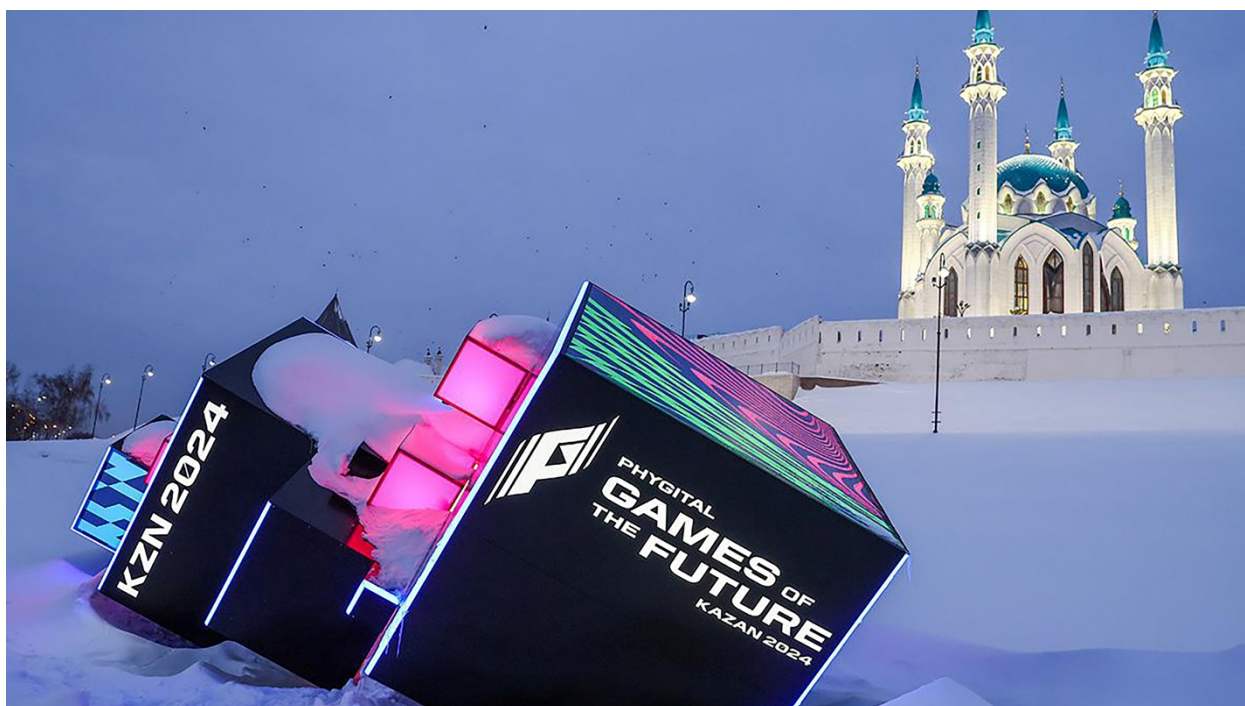
As one can see, the BRICS Media Summit not only brought together representatives of the media, and the civil society of the group's countries, and created a space for them to establish closer ties, but also became a rare opportunity in the modern world to openly express their point of view, find like-minded colleagues and help to better feel and evaluate those changes in the world order moving towards a multipolar world that we are witnessing today.

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Games of the Future 2024 in Kazan and the new era

Mikhail Gamandiy-Egorov

The Games of the Future 2024 were held in the capital of Tatarstan, the city of Kazan. This international event in the field of sports and high technologies can be safely called one of the first major steps in the victory not only for Russia as organizer of these games, but also for the entire multipolar world – freed from the influence of the geopolitical interests of the world minority over sport and major international competitions.



The opening ceremony of the very first international multi-sport tournament Games of the Future took place in Kazan, as previously announced. Participants from 107 countries took part in the games. The opening ceremony at the Kazan Expo exhibition center turned out to be colorful and impressive, in the high-tech and multimedia format, once again confirming Russia's ability to organize international events at the highest level.

This opening ceremony was attended by the heads of state of Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and the Serbian Republic of Bosnia. Russian President Vladimir Putin's greetings to the participants of the games had an important meaning, both in the context of the uniqueness of such a competition and the values that the Games of the Future embody: "I am happy to welcome to Russia the pioneers of phygital sport – a completely new and innovative format, having defined the very name of the competition: there are truly the games of the future.

The union of traditions and modernity, the harmony of physical perfection and high intelligence, the unity of sport and technology, education and science. All this is necessary for a person to fully develop and succeed in our era of rapid change, in a multifaceted, multipolar, free and competitive world that is being formed before our eyes. It is only natural that the idea of combining classic sport and cyber-sport was born in Russia.

Vladimir Putin: "The Games of the Future are our gift to the global sports family"

"Our country has been and remains one of the main sporting powers on the planet, the cradle of great athletes, victories and obtained records. We have always advocated the promotion of sport and its high humanist values. The Games of the Future are our gift to the global sports family", Vladimir Putin underlined.

For his part, the President of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, announced his country's desire to become the organizer of the Games of the Future next year, while the head of state of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, expressed his willingness to host the competition in 2026. Generally speaking, this major event represents not only a huge success for Russia and its closest allies, but also for the entire modern multipolar world. No matter how much this may displease the global minority, who have worked hard to try to isolate our country from international sport and major world tournaments.

The very fact that more than 2000 participants from 107 states – the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), BRICS, Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and even a number of Western countries, including the United States, France, Germany or Canada – are represented at the first Games of the Future, once again underlines the very philosophy of the multipolar world and the modern era in general. Namely, despite the most acute phase of geopolitical confrontation in modern history, the supporters of the multipolar world order do not close the doors to representatives of Western countries wishing to interact without paying attention to the orders of their so-called political and media elites. This is the difference between the global majority and the outright minority represented by the NATO-Western camp of those nostalgic for the era of unipolar domination.

In addition to the above-mentioned fact Russia's success as a key global force promoting multipolar reality is undoubtedly its ability to create and launch a unique kind of projects putting an emphasis on high technologies, when the enemy propaganda has been for years insisting on Russia's alleged "backwardness" in this area. Thus Russia's success is once again destroying the myths promoted by the Western minority for years, which also applies to the economy, including Russia's ability to put in place those who claimed to be "indispensable" economic and trade partners.

In other words, the myths of the outright Western minority are collapsing one after the other, but the most important thing once again is that the destruction of these myths is not so much the result of a priority policy line of Russia and its supporters, but simply logical stages of the processes taking place in the modern world that lead to these conclusions.

Returning to the Games of the Future in Kazan, the competition program, which included 21 disciplines divided into five directions – sport, tactics, strategy, technologies and speed – gave birth to a completely new modern and unique phenomenon, where sport, cutting-edge and innovative technologies, international representation of participating countries, mass online broadcasts and an impressive prize fund unambiguously make an important contribution to modern reality. The Games of the Future are this modern reality.

Games of the Future – the trend is set

The successful organization of the Games of the Future in Kazan not only once again confirmed the highest position of Russia as one of the leading powers in the fields of sports and high technologies, both in terms of results in competition and as an organizer of such global events, but also has clearly set a new global trend with enormous potential.

The total number of spectators present at the games venues exceeded 300 thousand people. The winners and prize-winners of the first Games of the Future were represented by 236 athletes from many countries, including Russia, China, India, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Spain, South Korea, the Philippines, Uruguay, Ecuador, Argentina and Colombia.

Interest in the Games of the Future was comparable to that of major events in the world of sport. The content distribution system included more than 280 broadcast channels, including major international and national media outlets. During the competition, more than 800 hours of live broadcasts were organized. More than nine countries, even before the end of the competition, expressed their desire to host the next games. It is

also worth noting that during the first seven days of the Games of the Future, broadcasts of the competitions and the opening ceremony of the games had more than 1 billion views worldwide.

The Games of the Future can certainly be called a new trend in the world of phygital sport, and generally, one of the significant symbols of the new era for humanity, where there cannot and should not be a monopoly of an outright minority on international sport and world competitions.

Especially, since other events of global scale, perfectly consistent with the modern multipolar era, will also soon gain momentum, whether the global minority likes it or not.

In general, if we talk specifically about the prospects for the Games of the Future as a revolutionary and completely new trend in the sphere of phygital sports, the event has been listed as a major international event on the global scale. The games will take place regularly and likely globally, which was to be proved. It won't be possible now to ban the games.

But there is another extremely important point. The Games of the Future, in addition to the completely new and modern format, with an impressive number of views and prize fund, have essentially restored the very basis of principles and values of international sport, where there is no discrimination against any country, whatever the geopolitics is. This is international sport as it should always be. And probably, these large international formats and these alternatives that are being created before our eyes are also fundamental tools to return to the roots that the world minority tried to eradicate to establish its own dictatorship, under the pretext of its pseudo-exclusiveness.

Of course, it is particularly significant that Russia is once again playing a special role here. Both from the point of view of the uniqueness of the Games of the Future format, and the fact that despite countless attempts to isolate our country from the world, the effect turned out to be completely opposite to the expectations of the instigators of these attempts. The Games of the Future trend is well underway. This trend is truly characteristic of the modern era and the current expectations of the majority of humanity. The majority, and not the other way around.

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St Petersburg Cultural Forum and the development of international humanitarian relations

Ksenia Muratshina

On September 11-14 the 10th St Petersburg International Cultural Forum took place under Russia's CIS and BRICS presidency.

This year the theme of the forum was 'Culture in the XXI century: sovereignty or globalism?'. The programme included a number of significant multilateral events.



The focus is on unity and cooperation

This forum is called the Forum of United Cultures because it centers on building humanitarian ties, mutual exchange of ideas and opinions, multiculturalism and multipolarity and the opportunity for representatives of various cultures to listen and hear each other and discuss common issues and challenges. In his speech at the plenary session of the Forum, Russian President Vladimir Putin noted that its very name encompasses “recognition of the civilizational diversity of the world, the natural right of people to identity, respect for traditional values and religions and, of course, the unconditional equality of states in shaping the world cultural agenda.”

The Russian leader recalled that “the key to the development of cultures is in constant interaction and mutual enrichment... A powerful creative force is in the unity of different cultures and traditions.” For Russia, such unity is “the source of our national identity.” On a global scale, against this background, one can now observe “the time of forming a new common international infrastructure of national cultures.”

At the same time, the President stressed that “the importance of humanism and dialogue, mutual respect and trust in the world is shared by the world majority,” however, due to the hostile actions of globalist elites, “it is under constant pressure and threat of erosion, primarily due to the unprecedented politicization of the cultural sphere, turning it into a weapon of geopolitical intrigue, due to constant attempts to push people to the margins of life, to belittle the importance of national systems of values.” More and more often we see that “the value agenda promoted by Western elites ignores – and sometimes intentionally offends – world religions, cultural traditions of entire regions of the world.” This has already become obvious to the ‘world majority’ and they see the ‘future of culture’ in a completely different way – “in mutual respect and trust, in equal international cooperation.”

Thus, the tone of the Forum was set. These principles and values – and this is very important – are aligned completely with the idea of a multipolar world, which almost all non-Western states, i.e. the world majority, have come to realize the need to build.

The friendly ones and the rest

This majority, in all its cultural diversity, including the densely populated and multinational countries of Eurasia, Africa, and Latin America, were very widely represented at the Forum. The sessions and discussions were attended by representatives of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Serbia, China, India, Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, UAE, Vietnam, Thailand, Mongolia, Brazil, Venezuela, Cuba, South Africa, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria and many other states and international organizations.

The participation of cultural figures from countries clearly unfriendly to Russia, e.g. France, Germany and Italy should be also noted. It seems that, over time, an increasing number of people in the West will eventually realize that it is impossible to discriminate, to ‘cancel’ culture or create a conflict of political contradictions with cultural exchanges. The language of cultural ties is universal; they are vital for all mankind.

From museums to AI

The Forum programme stretched over four days and was packed with not only business but also creative and cultural events. The participants discussed the most pressing and relevant topics for the whole world: preservation of cultural heritage, development of education in the field of culture, prospects for modern cinema, the interaction between culture and mass media, the role of art in socio-cultural rehabilitation of people with serious health problems, opportunities for the application of artificial intelligence technologies in the field of culture in a manner safe and beneficial for humanity and so forth. There were ten thematic sections in total: ‘The Right to Heritage in a Multipolar World,’ ‘Artificial Intelligence in Culture and National Sovereignty,’ ‘Cultural Heritage: Traditions and Modernity,’ ‘Business Culture,’ ‘Media Culture,’ ‘Cinema,’ ‘Theatre,’ ‘Music Culture,’ ‘Circus,’ ‘Museums.’

A number of sessions were focused on specific areas of international cooperation, which, from a practical point of view, was convenient and significant. Thus, discussions were held on ‘Towards the Eurasian partnership,’ ‘Cinematography of the CIS countries. Common past, sovereign present, multipolar future,’ ‘CIS countries — ways of rapprochement,’ ‘Museum cooperation: activities of ICOM (International Council of Museums) in Russia and the world,’ ‘Origins and new opportunities for dialogue between theaters of Russia and China,’ ‘Potential and formats of theatre dialogue between Russia and the BRICS countries.’

CIS and BRICS: increase in humanitarian contacts

Major international events beyond the framework of the Forum were held in St Petersburg through both multilateral structures. Meetings of the Council for Cultural Cooperation of the CIS member states and a meeting of the Ministers of Culture of the BRICS countries were held.

The Minister of Culture of the Russian Federation, Olga Lyubimova, raised the issue of preparing for the joint celebration of the 80th anniversary of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War in 2025 and took the initiative to create a CIS youth choir. It was proposed to appoint the Gnesin Russian Academy of Music as the curator of the project from the Russian side.

The meeting of BRICS Culture Ministers brought together representatives of Russia, Brazil, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Iran, UAE and Ethiopia. According to Olga Lyubimova, the meeting (the 9th in a row over the years of the group’s work) has become a landmark, as it is taking place for the first time after the large-scale expansion

of the BRICS. “BRICS is an open club of like-minded people, uniting the world’s largest political, economic and, of course, cultural centers”, the minister said, noting that she was glad to welcome new participants for the first time.

The results of the meeting are reflected in the joint declaration. Decisions have been made on increasing the number of BRICS art festivals and creating a special calendar of cultural events of the association. In the near future, new BRICS members are scheduled to join the alliances of museums, galleries, libraries and youth theatres of the group and join the Agreement on Cooperation in the field of Culture (2015). The initiatives taken by the Russian side include the creation of BRICS folk dance and film school alliances.

In addition, Olga Lyubimova invited BRICS countries to participate in Eurasian film projects - the Eurasian Academy of Cinematographic Arts and the Open Eurasian Film Awards. The joint declaration also identified several other areas of further cooperation, such as preservation of cultural heritage, creation of a BRICS creative industries platform with the involvement of experts from the countries of the association to harmonize the terminological and methodological base, exchange best practices and develop joint projects for sustainable production and consumption in the field of culture, including in the context of combating climate challenges. The BRICS New Development Bank will be able to support new joint projects.

Cultural programme: BRICS and beyond

The BRICS Cultural Festival was timed to the Forum. It took place at the Alexandrinsky Theatre on the opening day. The audience saw performances by leading musicians from the countries of the association: laureates of international competitions from Russia, Brazil, India, China, South Africa and the UAE. The genre diversity of the evening was impressive; the Russian stage brought together works of classical music, gospel, a virtuoso guitarist and a performance on a traditional Indian musical instrument, the sitar. Reflecting the purpose of the Forum, the organizers combined the musical traditions of different peoples.

Another concert within the framework of BRICS cooperation was held on the evening of September 13 at the Palace Square. It also demonstrated the connection of different cultures: duets of Russian popular performers with singers and musicians from BRICS countries performed in front of the visitors. Denis Maidanov with opera singer Ahmed al-Hosani from the UAE, Habib with Indian singer Sayli Ke, Yulianna Karaulova with Brazilian singer and violinist Matu Miranda, ST with Chinese performer Guo Ren, Garik Burrito with jazz singer Dudu Makhoba from South Africa. Thanks to its unique

organizational idea, the concert attracted wide attention of the public and gathered a lot of spectators, who warmly welcomed all of the evening's guests.

In addition to these events, the business agenda of the Forum was complemented by other events of a diverse cultural programme, each of them bright and memorable in its own way: an evening of music by Glinka at the State Academic Chapel of St Petersburg in honour of the 220th anniversary of the composer's birth, an exhibition of works by the Grekov studio of military artists 'Breathing Love for the Motherland ...', a presentation of the books 'Life for one's own friends' and 'There is no bond holier than comradeship,' published by the State Foundation 'Defenders of the Fatherland' and edited by Zakhar Prilepin, a concert of creative teams of the Armed Forces of Russia 'On valour, on exploits, on glory...' at the State Academic Chapel of St Petersburg, an exhibition 'Pushkinskaya 10. The Ark of the XXI Century' at the Central Exhibition Hall 'Manege' of more than 400 works of various genres (painting, graphics, sculpture, photography, installations), an exhibition of works by Belarusian artists at the Russian Museum, a gala concert of opera and ballet stars of Russia and Kazakhstan at the Mikhailovsky Theater, a musical show 'Singing Bridges,' an exhibition 'Petersburg! Life in the city ...' at the Levashovsky Bakery Cultural Centre, a presentation of the Hermitage Prize, a premiere of Eifman's ballet 'Crime and Punishment', an international circus festival 'Without Borders'. Among these events, each guest of the Forum could find something that warmed his heart and feel the trend of the times in combination with enduring cultural values.

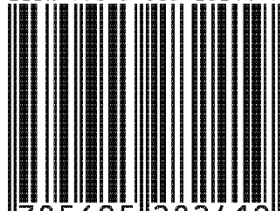
The Cultural Forum has become a truly significant event in international cultural life. According to the organizers, this year it gathered about 2,000 participants from 80 countries. The main thing that its programme provided humanitarian contacts, live communication and a discussion of the most pressing problems faced by Russian and foreign cultural figures. Russia has once again shown its openness and interest in other cultures, the ability to hear its partners and act with them in harmony.

It is encouraging to observe the 'cultural' expansion of BRICS, the initiative of Russia during its presidency of BRICS and CIS and the wide representation of African countries at the Forum. While everyone can answer a question of choosing between sovereignty and globalism in the name of the Forum for themselves, the participation of the countries of the 'world majority' has become the clearest demonstration of genuine multipolarity, mutual respect for the traditions of different peoples and mutual interest in their cultures. In fact, the results of the Forum should be reflected in joint projects, the continuation of established contacts between specialists from different

countries and better mutual understanding between representatives of different cultures – both in cultural contacts and in international cooperation in general.

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