

of the state. If any structure inside Iran acquires a monopoly position, it can only serve as a source of abuse, and it is very important that the fight against monopolism in Iran is based on the ideas of Islam, which considers competition an important condition for the discovery of the individual.

In what ways does the growth of BRICS affect the strategic alliances and economic partnerships within and beyond the bloc? What are the potential consequences of maintaining the traditional power structures in international relations?

Without healthy competition, market economies run out of steam and lose energy. This happens, as a rule, due to the concentration of market power "in the hands of one" — whether it is the

result of collusion or other monopolizations of markets. Holding all or most of the market power allows privileged market participants to act not according to a competitive, but a monopolistic logic, parasitizing consumers and other participants of economic relations. It cannot be said that the architects of the modern regulation system of the world economy do not understand this. Initially, the design of the World Trade Organization (WTO) contained a universal agreement on the protection of competition in the global economy, similar to the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), which introduced uniform standards of intellectual property protection for all WTO member countries. Such uniform standards of competition protection at the world

level could well balance the processes of globalization.

The BRICS countries are an interesting group of economies that are united by the fact that, for a number of reasons, they are not members of the "closed clubs" of the "capitalist core" countries. In many ways, they are strangers to the US, the EU, and their closest allies that are still dominant in international affairs. And each country is alien to this close group for different reasons and to different degrees.

The grouping has many differences — economic, social, and geopolitical. However, it is precisely because of their differences that the BRICS countries can agree on what they do not want the world economy to be. And the key word that already unites them on this issue is "multipolarity" — in other

words, the diversity of formats, ways, and means of organizing economic life. What the BRICS countries lack is diversity in global economic life. There are too many rigid forms imposed by the dominant group. Such a struggle for diversity is not very profitable for the dominant actors, as it reduces their monopolistic rents. However, a more diverse, multi-format organization system of the world economy seems to be important for countries that are already capable of competing at the global level but are in a less advantageous position due to this mono-organization of the world economic system.

The chart compares the real GDP growth forecasts of G7 member states (blue) and BRICS member states (orange) for 2024. IMF



BRICS as alternative rule maker in global governance

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OPINION

The West, led by the US, has been the main global rule-maker for decades. However, the "Rest" have not been satisfied with the global rules made by the West. In order to address how we must develop an alternative world order, we need to understand the shortcomings of the one which currently exists. The main problems with the present international order are not with its values or institutions, but with how they are practiced and managed. What the US calls a rules-based international order, in practice, has mostly been an order based on US rules and interests, not based on the UN or global rules.

From a strategic point of view, the US+ (by plus I mean the West, in general, and G7, in particular) have divided Europe, the Middle East, and East Asia. After the Cold War, the US and its partners tried to engage Russia economically and in the energy sector in order to stabilise global energy markets; however, they excluded Moscow from European security mechanisms. Russian exclusion and the undermining of its security led to the Ukraine conflict. In the Middle East, they excluded Iran for more than four decades from any mechanism and targeted Tehran using economic, political, and, indirectly, military means. US allies in the Middle East also tried to impose their security costs on the US by engaging Washington in regional and domestic conflicts; consequently, they destabilised the whole region.

"enemies" (who, in fact, do not exist). By outlining "enemies" in regional or global contexts, the US tries to control and influence its allies and partners. Without such an approach, US allies in Europe, the Middle East, and East Asia would be much more interested in pursuing strategic autonomy and independent foreign policies. Manipulating allies and partners helps the US undermine its rivals (Russia, Iran, and China). By concentrating on "threats," the US rivals will not be able to utilise opportunities and realise their economic and strategic potential. Geographically, the US has been far removed from regional and global wars and conflicts. For the US establishment, war is a business by other means. More than 2.5 million people work for MICs in different US states, and ap-

proximately the same number of people work in military-related businesses in countries that are US allies and partners. For that reason, supporting the wars in Ukraine, Gaza, and other regions is a component of America's domestic politics and the war business. Those who benefit from conflicts and instability are not interested in ending them, and it was partly the business aspect of conflicts that prolonged them in Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, Libya, the Korean peninsula, etc. That's why the US has been engaged in wars around the world more than any other country because the costs are paid by others. Consequently, North America benefits from peace and prosperity, and other parts of the world are engaged in regional and domestic conflicts. Politically, double standards are

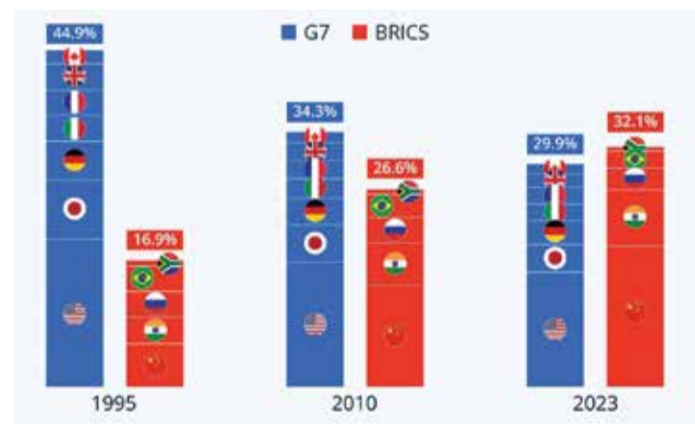
the most important shortcoming. The United States preaches about the rules-based international order, but when we look at the US and its allies' behaviour in Ukraine and the greater Middle East (Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, Syria, Libya, Palestine, etc.), we see that they do not practice what they preach. Violations of human rights, international, and humanitarian laws; occupation, invasion; the development of nuclear weapons; and even committing genocide are all allowed if it is done by the US and/or its allies and partners. Reliance on destructive power and burden-sharing is another shortcoming of the current international order. During the past three decades, the US has not tried enough to engage others (sometimes even its allies) in making

and more to economic and financial sanctions to impose their positions and undermine those who "are not with them". These are some of the shortcomings of the current world order — in fact, disorder — that has made many countries, companies, and societies dissatisfied and interested in looking for alternatives at regional and global levels. The alternative order needs to be globally acceptable and respectable. Such an order should be based more on the UN and global values and interests, including non-intervention, respect for international and humanitarian law and human rights; multi-polarity; indivisible security; peaceful development; peaceful coexistence; opposition to unilateral coercive measures; cultural diversity, etc. These values, sup-

provision of advanced technologies for Ukraine has not helped the country achieve decisive victories on the battlefield. In purchasing power parity terms, the BRICS+ GDP has surpassed that of the G7: in 2023, BRICS' share of global GDP was 32%, while that of the G7 was 29%. Based on IMF statistics, in 2024 emerging markets and developing economies' share of global GDP will be 59%, while the developed economies' share will be 40%. BRICS, in total, has bigger markets and more natural resources, and mostly enjoys younger, educated populations and a greater economic growth rate than advanced, developed countries. Geographically, BRICS+ is more global and more inclusive than G7. Aside from Japan, the G7



G7 leaders watch a skydiving demo during their summit at Borgo Egnazia, Italy, on June 13, 2024. Felice De Martino/ZUMA



The chart shows the share of the member states of G7 (blue) and BRICS (red) from global GDP at purchasing power parity in 1995, 2010, and 2023 based on IMF estimates as of 2023. IMF WORLD ECONOMIC OUTLOOK



Russian President Vladimir Putin (2nd-L) meets with Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf (2nd-R) on the sidelines of a BRICS parliamentary forum in Saint Petersburg, Russia, on July 11, 2024. VALERY SHARIFULIN/POOL

in East Asia, they are doing the same with China. The US benefits from the Chinese market and engages with China economically; however, in order to benefit from China's rising military power, they need to compete with Beijing. That's why, when it comes to security, China is defined as a "threat". Emphasising this Chinese threat helps the US limit Beijing's economic power and influence. There are others who benefit from this approach, too. Construing Russia, Iran, and China as threats helps the US battle its own budget at home, control allies abroad, and undermine rivals. By fabricating "enemies and rivals," it's much easier to over 800-billion-dollar military budgets at home every year and convince the people that "we are defending the country" against

important decisions regarding wars and conflicts. The US makes small coalitions and launches war by using its destructive power first and then, Washington tries to organise an international conference for "peace-building" and "burden-sharing"; and whenever others are not ready to cooperate, and/or the conflicts are too costly, the US leaves the conflicts for others to suffer. Afghanistan was the latest case, and it imposed huge costs on the region, especially on Iran. The last, but not least, problem with the US rules-based order is the weaponisation of finance and business as a new tool; it has left many countries, and even Western companies, dissatisfied. Since direct conflicts have become too expensive and Western societies are not interested in paying, the US and its allies have turned more

ported by BRICS member states, are more global and inclusive. However, having common values is not enough. Words should have weight. Are the BRICS member states strong enough to push forward an alternative order based on the UN and global values? Yes. Militarily, almost all BRICS member states are able to defend themselves. There are three nuclear powers among each grouping (the US, the UK, and France in the G7 and Russia, China, and India in BRICS). Although the G7 members may have access to more advanced technologies, these have not helped them win most of the important wars since the Vietnam War. The US failed in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Israel, with all the advanced weapons provided by the US, has not been able to win a war against a small group in Palestine; and NATO's

members are all Western countries, while BRICS ranges from China in the Far East to Brazil in South America and from Russia in the North to South Africa; recently, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt in the centre joined the group. BRICS+ has the capacity to create a global network that is very important in making global rules. However, to play as an alternative rule maker engaged in global governance, there are some shortcomings that BRICS+ needs to find a solution to. Some of them include: **Financial mechanisms:** The US/EU sanctions are effective, I think, mostly because of the effectiveness of existing financial institutions, which force companies and countries alike to comply and sometimes over-comply with them. BRICS needs to develop its own financial and legal

in the regions that the US has less control over, like the Silk Road and the North-South Corridor connecting India as well as the Arab and African countries to Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Russia through Iran. **Comprehensive/indivisible security:** Security cannot be limited to the military and intelligence. Economic, social, and cyber security are also very important; BRICS needs to concentrate and invest more in economic and social development in West Asia, Central Asia, Africa, and South America. By connecting different developing regions around the world, BRICS can really present itself as an alternative rule-maker in global governance, based on UN rules.

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