BRICS: Is the Global Order Changing, or Are Power Centers Within It Merely Shifting?

(Translated)

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On September 12, 2026, BRICS leaders met in India. The summit concluded with the adoption of the “New Delhi Declaration,” in which the group affirmed its commitment to strengthening multilateralism, reforming global governance institutions, increasing the representation of emerging markets and developing states, and building a “fairer and more equitable” international order.

These outcomes bring back to the forefront a question that has accompanied BRICS since its inception: Is it a genuine tool for curbing Western hegemony, or merely a coalition of divergent interests seeking to adjust the balance of power without offering an alternative principle for the international order?

BRICS: Balancing Hegemony, Not Building a Monolithic Bloc

To begin with, it is essential to recall that BRICS was not originally established to dismantle the global capitalist system. The term “BRIC” was coined in 2001 by Goldman Sachs economist Jim O’Neill to describe Brazil, Russia, India, and China as emerging economies within a context of unipolar American hegemony. The term subsequently evolved into a framework for political and economic cooperation; meetings began in 2006, the first summit was held in 2009, and South Africa joined in 2010, resulting in the name “BRICS.” Thus, a classification that originated within the Western capitalist order transformed into a bloc seeking to redistribute power within that same order—curbing Western dominance and boosting the influence of emerging powers—without proposing an exit from capitalism or the destruction of the global economic order. However, the expansion of BRICS has not made the group more homogeneous; rather, it has heightened its internal contradictions. India maintains a growing strategic partnership with the United States and competes with China within its own Asian sphere, while Russia—wary of direct confrontation with the U.S.—avoids challenging it in areas of American influence and is keen to ensure that China’s rising power does not evolve into dominance over Russia itself. Furthermore, the accession of Arab states and Iran has introduced a complex web of regional balances and rivalries. Iran faces adversaries—some of whom maintain close ties with Washington—while Saudi Arabia upholds its strategic relationship with the U.S., and was represented at the summit only by its foreign minister. Nevertheless, BRICS has managed to bring these disparate parties together under one roof.

The depth of these contradictions became apparent last May, when a BRICS foreign ministers’ meeting failed to issue a joint statement due to disagreements over the war in the Middle East; however, the New Delhi summit successfully overcame this hurdle by issuing a joint declaration calling for “maximum restraint,” dialogue, and diplomacy. In this context, the presence of Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian was no mere detail; he sat alongside leaders of states closely allied with the U.S., sought to reassure Gulf states, and endeavored to open channels for dialogue—including a meeting with the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi. Herein lies the significance of BRICS: it does not necessarily resolve its members' conflicts, but it provides a framework where adversaries can sit together without Washington dictating the terms of engagement. Thus, the scope for maneuvering expands beyond the Western center, even as the group's enlargement simultaneously intensifies its internal contradictions. China: From Balancing Power to Controlling Structure.

While both Russia and China are pushing for a more multipolar world, China possesses an additional asset: industrial and technological might. At the summit, President Xi Jinping called for deepening industrial cooperation in artificial intelligence, sharing the outcomes of research, development, and application, and strengthening collaboration across industrial and supply chains. This approach shaped the summit’s declaration, which highlighted technology transfer and increasing the participation of developing states in higher-value manufacturing stages.

However, these slogans—which may appeal to those impressed by China’s industrial rise—should not obscure the reality of the competition for economic influence. In practice, the proclaimed cooperation could translate into an expansion of China’s control over supply chains and a strengthened position in securing raw materials from Muslim states, while the highest-value stages—such as refining, advanced manufacturing, and technology—remain concentrated elsewhere.

Thus, the West has played a role in creating the very power it now fears: by offshoring production to China and turning it into the “factory of the world,” the West discovered that this factory does not merely produce goods but also holds the keys to supply chains. Consequently, current Western anxiety regarding China’s influence is inextricably linked to the economic choices made by Western companies and nations themselves over the course of decades.

Critical Raw Minerals (CRMs): A New Arena of Conflict

The issue of Critical Raw Minerals (CRMs) was not a mere passing initiative by India at this summit; it was explicitly addressed in Paragraph 67 of the New Delhi Declaration. The declaration called for supply chains of Critical Raw Minerals (CRMs) that are reliable, diverse, resilient, and equitable, emphasizing benefit-sharing, value addition, and economic diversification for resource-rich nations. The announcement also linked these minerals to energy security and supply chain resilience. Elsewhere, it called for increased participation by developing nations in higher-value manufacturing and technology transfer.

Critical Raw Minerals (CRMs) refers to more than just Rare Earth Elements (REEs); the concept is broader, encompassing materials such as antimony, gallium, germanium, and tungsten. They are deemed “critical” due to their economic and strategic importance, combined with the risk that their supplies could be disrupted or are concentrated in specific countries. The issue reveals a deeper imbalance in the structure of the global capitalist economy: resource-rich states are often relegated to exporting raw materials, whereas refining, manufacturing, and technology—the highest-value stages of the value chain—are concentrated in major industrialized states. Consequently, the struggle over critical minerals is fundamentally a contest over who owns the resources, who adds value to them, and who controls the associated industrial and technological supply chains.

Meanwhile, Western concern regarding reliance on China is mounting. A study by Govini revealed that over 80,000 components across approximately 1,900 U.S. weapon systems utilize one or more of five critical minerals—antimony, gallium, germanium, tungsten, and tellurium—leaving roughly 78% of U.S. Department of Defense weapon systems vulnerable to disruptions in these supply chains.

China holds significant dominance over the production or processing of these five key minerals and their global supply chains; consequently, its export restrictions on gallium, germanium, antimony, and others have become a direct concern for the United States. The U.S. and its allies have begun to view supply chains not merely as an economic issue, but as a matter of national security. China’s use of this leverage may drive the West to accelerate the creation of alternative supply chains in an effort to break its dependence on China.

From Multipolarity to the Question of Ideology

BRICS has expanded and gained greater weight, shifting from merely challenging the dominance of the Western order to attempting to build financial, industrial, and technological mechanisms that reduce reliance on it. Yet, it has not resolved its fundamental contradiction: how can it establish an order more independent of the West when China remains the group's dominant industrial and technological power? Does multipolarity necessarily equate to justice, or will the logic of international relations continue to be driven by power, self-interest, and influence?

What is needed today is not merely a change in the dominant pole within a corrupt capitalist system, but a shift in the ideological governing relations between states. Here, the Dawah of Hizb ut Tahrir emerges, presenting an alternative civilizational model rather than just a new geopolitical axis. This civilizational project—embodied by the Khilafah Rashidah (rightly-guided Caliphate)—does not stop at redistributing power; it introduces a standard to govern power itself: Islam. Under this model, relations between states are founded on justice, truth, and the honoring of pledges, rejecting the notion that economic or military might confers a right to hegemony or a license to subjugate peoples and exploit them ruthlessly.

Thus, while BRICS may succeed in weakening certain instruments of the Western center, it does not inherently possess a comprehensive vision for the world it seeks to build. This is the true void: not a vacuum of power, but a vacuum of ideology—a strategic, civilizational void that will be filled only by the Islamic State destined to arrive soon, by the permission of Allah (swt) Who said, ﴿وَعْدَ اللَّهِ لَا يُخْلِفُ اللَّهُ وَعْدَهُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ﴾ **“It is the promise of Allah. Allah does not fail in His promise, but most of the people do not know.”** [TMQ Surah Ar-Rum: 6].