

BRICS+ AND THE VISION OF A NEW INTERNATIONAL ORDER

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- The collapse of bipolar world order and the ontological impossibility of a unipolar world order
- First of all, I would like to start my speech by thanking the host of the "XXII International Likhachev Scientific Readings" meeting for bringing us together here today. I greet you all with respect on behalf of the Marmara Group Foundation from Istanbul.
- I would like to take you on a tour of the horizon and talk about yesterday. The collapse of the bi-polar world order after the fall of Berlin wall was celebrated widely, in a global euphoria, and many in the western hemisphere were quick to celebrate the definitive victory of pax Americana. Yet, the more than 30 years that have passed since then have not produced the expected environment.
- Not only have the power asymmetries become exponentially larger, leading to much more damaging conflicts, but also, and more importantly, the leadership of pax Americana was not as successful as expected. In the status-quo ante, i.e. the previous bi-polar global order, the US and USSR, as the leads of two blocks, were both checking and also balancing each other's power, hence creating circumstances to either prevent or solve crises. In the unipolar global order, the US, or the group of developed Western democracies it leads, either could not effectively meddle in or consciously refrained from intervening to global crises and conflicts since the fall of the Berlin wall.
- Simultaneously with the new post-bipolar world order, leading liberal political thinkers had declared the end of the history, arguing that western style liberal democracies were the ultimate and most developed political system, placing liberal democracy in a position of unquestionable supremacy.
- However, liberal democracies are also still in great dilemmas. Even in the developed nations, the liberal democracy is experiencing ontological problems, leading to doubts about its very future. The last round of US presidential elections, and the developments that took place shortly after it, make a case in point.
- The debate now evolves more around the sustainability of democracies into the future.

- In the decades since the collapse of the Berlin wall, the rising power asymmetries between the North and the South, between the developed west and the rest, between the wealthy and the poor have lead to rising walls between these two ends.
 - The very idea of ‘nation state’ made a strong comeback in many corners of the world and border walls started rising again. The tension between Hungary and the rest of the EU is a vivid example.
 - Rising border walls are generally considered a result of mass involuntary immigration, there to bloc the moving masses. Yet, the causality is also vice versa: rising walls also provoke more intimidation and deprivation, leading to stronger immigration movements.
 - The legacies of armed conflicts as well as economic failures are among the reasons of mass immigration, but it wouldn’t be wrong to argue that both parameters are also connected to rising asymmetries between the wealthy North and the global South.
 - Rising national borders, deteriorating transnational immigration as well as their reasons and results make a chaotic matrix of problems that very negatively effect the working of a healthy international order. This also creates an enemy for the development of democracy in the global South.
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- Adding more drama to the scene, the intergovernmental bodies established after the Second World War are not functioning properly. The UN is well intended but largely ineffective, due to the fact that it has no muscles without the consensus of the Security Council. Even when there is consensus, as we have recently seen in the resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, there is no power of enforcement.
 - The same is valid for many of UN’s agencies, working in diverse fields from refugees to environment to conflict resolution. Since the global architecture still largely relies on these bodies for certain areas, those areas continue to be troublesome.
 - It is in this environment that the need for a new, polycentric global architecture emerged.
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- In recent years, we have observed three important points:
 1. a unipolar world order creates power asymmetries, making checks and balances impossible;
 2. rising nationalisms are worsening the situation, contributing to more inequalities ;

3. the divide between the developed North and deprived South is leading to chronic problem areas, from immigration to environmental degradation.
- When we add the other, auxiliary factors that contribute to these three points, such as the ineffectiveness of intergovernmental organisations, the need for a quest for a new global order appears more urgent and vital than ever.
 - Therefore, a return to a multi-centred global architecture has become a vital necessity today, to come over the impasses that we face in many different realms. But establishing that architecture is not easy. First, a balancing act is needed.
 - That balancing act currently comes as opposition of Russia and China to certain proposals at the UN Security Council, or else, in the form of economic competition between the US and China, among others. But these are individual realms, limited to their specific contexts. A concerted balancing structure is needed to make possible a pluralist global environment that may consequently make possible a new, multi-centered global architecture.
 - BRICS has emerged for the new polycentric global architecture.

 - When BRICS first emerged, it was hailed more as an economic power block that represented the interests of so-called emerging, developing economies. This largely was a result of the fact that all the five economies that made BRICS were economic production powerhouses – and still are. But today, BRICS mean more than economy and trade.
 - BRICS today has an emerging concerted political action, and that action, despite still underrated by Western establishments, proves to be resilient. Yes, BRICS still needs time to mature its dedication to certain political agendas. Yet, as its recent enlargement has shown, it is today an intergovernmental alliance that has an established vision and roadmap. Once the vision is there, the rest would come.
 - More importantly, and consequently, BRICS have started to define their own global agendas. BRICS nations are not merely re-active any more, but pro-active. Rather than attaching to the agendas established by other global powers, many BRICS nations today pursue and extend their own agendas. The case opened in The Hague by South Africa against Israel is one good, successful example.

 - The recent enlargement of BRICS to include 5 new member countries is a welcome step in the way to establish the multi-centred global architecture that I referred above. The newcomer nations all have their merits, their peculiar hinterlands and their independent political agendas, that would contribute to

the global power of BRICS+. Yet, the diverging priorities of each of the newcomers, and peculiar rivalries between some of them, would make the task a complicated one.

- At this stage, BRICS+ should also think about crafting a better-designed organizational structure, a secretariat, that would transform it into a continuous, governance-based entity, from its current form of a periodic conference. While doing this, BRICS+ members should not sacrifice the rather co-operative spirit that makes it unique and special. A continuous secretariat will make possible many tasks and functions to be governed independent from each member country, while remaining strictly under their supervision.
- Before I conclude, I would also touch upon an essential issue. What makes BRICS+ special and successful? It is its transactional nature. That nature enables the inclusion of many different countries with different cultures, values and political systems. Still, establishing some sort of a shared values proposition, while strictly maintaining the transactional nature, would only make BRICS+ stronger than it is today. At the end, we may come from different political systems, but we shouldn't forget there is more shared values than what many others suppose about us, which brought us together today. We should not be reluctant to open up to new horizons, while remaining dedicated to our founding spirit.

Thank you very much indeed for your attention.