

BRICS+ 2026: Specifics of Positioning, Prospects for Development and Impact on Ukraine's Interests

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Introduction

The BRICS+ (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, and new members) format is a grouping of states of the former “third world”, which have considerably accelerated the pace of their development in the twenty-first century and aspire to a more prominent role in global economic and, more recently, political processes. Since its founding, this club has undergone a certain evolution – from a grouping of large states with high rates of economic growth to a distinctive geopolitical format that claims to represent the interests of the so-called Global South. In 2026, BRICS+ marks its twentieth anniversary with a considerably wider circle of participants: the group has grown from 4 to 10 countries. This year, BRICS+ is chaired by the Republic of India, which for several years has been presenting itself as the “Voice of the Global South”, so this format is exceptionally convenient for it in the context of its own strategy.

BRICS+ is a classic example of so-called “club diplomacy”, that is, a consultative mechanism and an instrument for expanding mutually beneficial cooperation in various areas, which declares the urgent need to reform the principles of global governance and international financial institutions. The aim is to strengthen the representation of rapidly developing countries (this indicator remains key, although there are already exceptions, notably the Russian Federation (RF) and the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI)). BRICS+ offers an attractive alternative platform in such key spheres as investment, business, trade, education, and technology, as well as joint solutions to social problems and responses to the environmental challenges facing humanity. The consultation mechanism does not require consensus or rigid rules and, on the contrary, leaves ample room for compromise. However, the existence of differing approaches to particular issues of the global order and regional situations, and at times serious contradictions between member countries (such as between India and China), slow down the work of BRICS+.

Since 2014, the BRICS+ states have not supported, but in no way condemned, Russia's actions in Ukraine; the same neutral position has been common to them since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. This approach stems from the fact that, for the most part, they view the war in Ukraine as a manifestation of confrontation between Russia and the West; it is precisely this narrative that Russian propaganda actively promotes. The present analysis is an attempt to ascertain to what extent and why this mechanism may be relevant in the current conditions of the growing chaos of the global space and how it will influence the shaping of the global order in the near future, as well as whether it poses a certain threat to Ukraine's interests.

Analysis of Situation

BRICS emerged as an informal inter-state grouping of the largest developing countries by area and population. Until the latest enlargement, the five BRICS states – Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa – represented 41% of the world's population and approximately 26% of global gross domestic product (GDP).

In 2001, Jim O'Neill (a renowned economist, at the time an analyst at the investment bank Goldman Sachs, and now a member of the House of Lords of the Parliament of the United Kingdom) coined the acronym BRIC to denote Brazil, Russia, India, and China, whose economies were developing at a rapid pace. In a report devoted to the future of the world, he predicted that these states could become the leading economies over the next 50 years. BRIC gradually became formalized during 2006-2008: at the first meeting of the BRIC foreign ministers on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in New York in 2006 and at the meeting of the leaders at the Group of Eight (G8) summit on the island of Hokkaido (Japan) in 2008. The first official BRIC summit took place in Yekaterinburg (Russian Federation) in 2009. After South Africa joined the group in 2011, the grouping's name was changed to BRICS. The grouping belongs to "club diplomacy", as it is not institutionalized – it has no headquarters or statutory documents, and the chairmanship rotates annually.

The group subsequently expanded to include Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Saudi Arabia, which announced its accession in 2023, has never acquired full membership. Argentina declined to join BRICS owing to a change of government in the country – the election of the pro-Western president Javier Milei. The latest to join the club, in 2025, was Indonesia. According to the World Bank, the current 10 BRICS countries encompass over 48% of the world's population and almost 27% of the global economy. These countries extract 45% of the world's oil and hold around 15% of the votes in the structure of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

BRICS is not a free trade bloc, but its members coordinate their work on financial and economic matters. Over time, the main goal of BRICS became precisely the reform of the international financial system and of global financial, economic, and governance institutions – the IMF and the World Bank. In 2014, they established the New Development Bank (NDB) with an authorized capital of \$100 billion. The Bank's initial capital amounted to \$50 billion; it was distributed in equal shares of 18.98% among the founding countries, with the remainder allocated to other investors, notably Egypt (2.27%) and the UAE (1.06%), which at the time of joining were not yet BRICS members, to coordinate infrastructure loans. The NDB currently holds capital of \$250 billion for investment in developing countries.¹

At the same time, the Contingent Reserve Arrangement was created – for conducting settlements between countries in national currencies. Both mechanisms are regarded as alternatives to those operating within the IMF and the World Bank, which are considered excessively oriented towards the United States. At the BRICS summit in Russia in 2015, the ministers of the BRICS countries initiated consultations on a payment system that would serve as an alternative to the SWIFT (Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication) system – after preparations had begun in the Russian Federation itself to create its own financial messaging system, the SPFS (System for Transfer of Financial Messages), following statements about the possibility of disconnecting Russian financial institutions from SWIFT. BRICS members primarily seek to reduce their dependence on the use of the US dollar. At the BRICS summit in South Africa in 2023, the BRICS countries committed themselves to exploring the possibility of creating a new common currency. However, in the view of experts, the groundwork for this is effectively absent, since a transition to a common monetary unit would above all mean transferring part of the sovereign rights of member states to the supranational New Development Bank, which is extremely difficult. Nevertheless, alternative options for de-dollarization exist.

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In the longer term, the group plans to establish a common currency pegged to gold. In 2019, the share of BRICS gold reserves stood at 11.2% of global reserves; in 2025, BRICS+ held 17.4% of global reserves.² Among the reasons for purchasing gold, the countries' central banks cite better protection against inflation as opposed to the US dollar, as well as the further potential fragmentation of trade blocs due to the tightening of the sanctions regime. The People's Republic of China (PRC) is already building a repository for gold reserves in Shanghai (where the NDB headquarters is located), which all member countries will be able to use. The rapid growth of gold reserves within BRICS+ will continue to influence the international monetary system and the logic of asset allocation. A potential common currency could also count on being backed by oil assets, given that leading member countries of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) have either already joined BRICS (Iran, the UAE) or have expressed a desire to join – Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Venezuela, and Nigeria.

During the full-scale invasion of Ukraine and after the imposition of Western sanctions, the Russian Federation launched its own payment system, MIR, and India permitted the use of the MIR card on its territory. Finally, one of the new developments in this context is quick response (QR) payments, which do not require holding any bank card. This payment system is already quite popular in many Asian countries, including BRICS+ members (India, China, Indonesia), as well as in Brazil. Thus, the question of a common currency is for now being removed from the agenda, while the goal of de-dollarization remains one of the principal objectives of the format's activities.

Cooperation within BRICS has two mechanisms – consultations on a wide range of issues during meetings of state leaders and ministers, and practical cooperation through various multilateral sectoral formats (in the spheres of trade, finance, energy, healthcare, education, sport, culture, science and technology, agriculture, the environment, technological disasters, the fight against terrorism and drug trafficking, and consultations on various social problems – women's labor, child protection, the fight against corruption, and so on). Among these, one can single out special BRICS working groups, such as the group on countering extremism and terrorism or the Anti-Corruption Working Group. In recent years, the problems of digitalization and the use of artificial intelligence have been added to the range of important areas of cooperation. Such a broad agenda makes participation in BRICS+ attractive for many developing countries, particularly on the African continent.

The meeting of leaders on 22-24 August 2023 in Johannesburg, South Africa (the first in an offline format after the coronavirus pandemic and the start of the Russian Federation's full-scale invasion of Ukraine), had a clearly defined regional character and was held under the title "BRICS and Africa: Partnership for Mutually Accelerated Growth, Sustainable Development and Inclusive Multilateralism". The leaders of all African countries, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres, and the heads of state of potential new members of the grouping were invited to the summit. A number of Western countries, including France, expressed a desire to take part in discussions on the sidelines of the summit but did not receive an invitation (according to available information, Russia objected). Vladimir Putin did not attend the summit because of the arrest warrant issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC); Russia was represented by Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

For the states of Africa, the BRICS+ format is quite attractive and is regarded as one of the options for addressing the problems of the continent's economic and social development. "Africa is home to 1.3 billion people, which constitutes around 17% of the world's population. It also occupies 20% of the Earth's surface, while its share of the world's arable land and mineral reserves amounts to 60% and 30% respectively, which testifies to the continent's great wealth. Despite this, Africa produces only 3% of global GDP, while having a similar share of international trade. Meanwhile, other BRICS member states, such as India, China, and Russia, complain about the lack of due influence in world affairs and the global economy despite their weight... This is happening even though, after the 15th summit, at which the bloc admitted new members, BRICS+ now controls 75% of the world's manganese, 50% of the world's graphite, 28% of the world's nickel, 10% of copper, and 42% of global oil reserves. Many hope that, by using its collective strength, the bloc will be able to help resolve the existing inequality".³

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Evidently, the view has gradually spread that, if united, the voices of developing countries will be heard more loudly.

The international situation, including the Russo-Ukrainian war (owing to its negative consequences for developing countries, in Africa in particular), has intensified debates as to whether the bloc will remain a trade alliance and a platform for discussion, or whether it can become a new effective international coalition. At the summit in South Africa, the BRICS countries once again sought to present themselves as an attractive alternative to Western approaches to international processes, with an emphasis on the diversity of the world and the multiplicity of development paths, while avoiding open confrontation with the West (South Africa's position). Thus, the geopolitical emphasis is steadily gaining weight in the positioning of this club.

Lord Jim O'Neill, the author of the BRICS idea, assessing the format's activities in 2025, frankly noted that he could never have imagined the transformation of BRICS from a group of states united by certain economic indicators into a political format. In his view, this testifies to the deepening of the crisis of global governance, which already existed in 2001 and has only intensified over 20 years, and to the West's inability to take into account the realities of the modern complex world, in particular the role and ambitions of developing countries.⁴ He could hardly have dreamed either of the club's membership increasing to 10, although even then he was studying the ratio of the potential and economic indicators of the developed states (the Group of Seven (G7)) and the BRICS members. At present, their positions are as follows (2025):

Countries of Region	Nominal GDP, \$ trillion	Change in Real GDP, %	Population, million
World Total	118.2	3.4	8,030.0
Brazil	2.3	2.3	213.4
Ethiopia	0.1	9.2	110.6
Egypt	0.4	4.4	107.9
India	3.9	7.6	1,460.0
Indonesia	1.4	5.1	284.4
Iran	0.4	-1.5	87.1
China	19.6	5.0	1,410.0
United Arab Emirates	0.6	5.8	11.4
Republic of South Africa	0.4	1.1	63.1
RF	2.6	1.0	144.0
BRICS+ Total	31.7		3,891.8
BRICS+ Share, %	26.8		48.5
United Kingdom	4.0	1.3	69.5
Italy	2.6	0.5	58.9
Canada	2.3	1.7	41.6
Germany	5.0	0.2	83.6

US	30.8	2.1	341.9
France	3.4	0.9	68.9
Japan	4.4	1.2	123.3
G7 Total	52.5		787.6
G7 Share, %	44.4		9.8

Source: calculated on the basis of International Monetary Fund data.

As we can see, the G7 countries still constitute the backbone of the global economy; moreover, the pace of development of certain BRICS+ countries has slowed considerably. At the same time, a large population is regarded as a brake rather than an advantage..

Enlargement of BRICS

After the group's decision to admit new members at the beginning of 2023, a total of 40 countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America at various times expressed their desire to join the format. It should be noted that the question of enlargement has been the subject of lively debate for quite some time: the BRICS+ enlargement formula was proposed by China in 2017 and officially adopted as the new name of the format at the summit in South Africa in 2023. The interest of countries such as Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, and Egypt in joining the bloc was seen as an opportunity to strengthen the influence of BRICS, both economic and political, by expanding its geography. It is also evident that BRICS+ offers an attractive platform for countries that for a certain period were effectively excluded from the global system, such as Iran and Venezuela.

However, the attitude of the founding countries towards the admission of new members is not unambiguous; the difference between the Indian and Chinese approaches is particularly palpable. India, which maintains active ties with the West, is concerned about enlargement: it would prefer to avoid cooperation with authoritarian and sanctioned regimes, as well as competition with new powerful actors such as Saudi Arabia. A major reservation for the Indians is the excessive loyalty of potential members to the PRC, which provokes a further increase in China's role and the transformation of the format into a kind of Chinese "fan club". India is also concerned about a possible shift in the regional balance of power: for example, a positive decision on admitting Thailand to BRICS+ could trigger a chain reaction in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) area and upset the regional balance. The Republic of India proposed a five-year pause before continuing enlargement and also lobbied for an option whereby potential members could join as observers and only later acquire full membership. Nevertheless, in 2025, another ASEAN country – Indonesia – joined BRICS+.

What is important in the process of the format's further enlargement is precisely the preservation of the regional balance. Analysts at the Atlantic Council believe that the further success of BRICS+ will depend on whose approach prevails – the Indian or the Chinese one.⁵ For now, we can see that the club's founders are trying to maintain a fragile consensus on this issue – the states becoming members of the group are those that have good relations with both countries, the Republic of India and the PRC.

For the PRC, this process is important for the purpose of further strengthening its geopolitical weight, so as, if not to approach global dominance, then at least to share it with the United States. Enlargement may also open up new opportunities for the PRC's economic growth against the backdrop of problems within China, technological dependence on the West, and so on. Russia actively supports the Chinese position on expanding BRICS+, counting on the format's continued anti-

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Western orientation, whereas India, Brazil, and South Africa do not approve of such confrontation: BRICS+ should be an alternative to the West, with which it will coexist and work on equal terms.

At the summit in Johannesburg, a certain compromise was reached on the first stage of the group's enlargement: it was decided to invite Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, which were to become full members of BRICS from 1 January 2024; however, after the change of government in Argentina, that country withdrew its application, and Saudi Arabia likewise never officially acquired membership. It is worth noting that, for the first time, 3 Muslim countries became participants in the group, which fits entirely into the concept of BRICS+ as a multi-civilizational format. In 2025, the country with the world's largest Muslim population – Indonesia – also joined. During 2024, official applications for accession were submitted by countries such as Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, and Malaysia; their potential accession could considerably increase the Muslim component of the format.

There is no official confirmation of similar intentions on the part of Türkiye, but talk of this is constantly circulating, and such news is actively relayed in the Russian Federation, which welcomes the "disappointment of Turkish friends" with the policy of orientation towards the West. By contrast, in 2025, India voiced its reservations about Türkiye's accession to BRICS+. This was due to the fact that, during the India–Pakistan confrontation in April–May 2025, Türkiye actively supported its strategic partner – the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Such debates indicate that in the future it will be extremely difficult for member countries to reach consensus owing to the existing contradictions in their national interests.

Russia and BRICS

For the Russian Federation, this format remains effectively the only one available for maintaining its position. Since the annexation of Crimea in 2014, the BRICS group has served as a guarantor against the diplomatic isolation of the Russian Federation, and the Russian leader has remained an entirely acceptable partner for his BRICS colleagues. For example, in July 2014, Brazil rejected Western calls to bar Vladimir Putin from the BRICS summit in Fortaleza. Since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Russia has been actively using BRICS as an instrument of survival under Western sanctions. In particular, during the BRICS summit in Beijing, held online, Vladimir Putin stated in his address that in the first three months of 2022, trade between the Russian Federation and the BRICS countries had increased by 38%. Subsequently, a rapid intensification of Russia's cooperation with India and China was observed, especially in the energy sector. In his video address to the participants of the BRICS Business Forum in South Africa in 2023, Vladimir Putin repeated the usual propaganda clichés about the "irresponsible behavior of Western countries, illegal sanctions and the freezing of the assets of certain states, which provoked a shortage of goods, rising food prices and the deepening of inequality and the suffering of poorer nations". Without in any way mentioning the war in Ukraine, he called for opposition to "the West's violation of all norms of free trade". In addition, the president of the Russian Federation attempted to accuse Ukraine and its partners of imposing unfair conditions for the Black Sea Grain Initiative and thereby to explain the Russian Federation's withdrawal from that agreement.⁶

The year-long chairmanship of individual countries in the BRICS+ format sets a certain tone and places emphases in accordance with the geopolitical priorities of the chairing state. Accordingly, in 2024, during the Russian Federation's chairmanship, Russia's desire to use cooperation with the BRICS+ member countries to improve its own economic situation was evident, while political dividends are also important for the aggressor state. The Russian Federation's chairmanship took place after the first major enlargement of BRICS+ and against the backdrop of the receipt of new applications; accordingly, Moscow gained a wider audience for promoting its own narratives. Throughout the year, the Russian Federation set the agenda of working meetings, actively promoted among member countries the theses about the need to confront the West, and justified its war

against Ukraine in every possible way. In order to achieve its own geopolitical objectives, Russia sought to cement the grouping by introducing a new unifying concept of the “global majority”, which is a certain alternative to the so-called “Global South”, whose voice India seeks to position itself as, and to China’s Belt and Road Initiative, aimed at building a “community of shared destiny and prosperity”.

As early as after the annexation of Crimea and the start of the war against Ukraine, the Russian analyst and propagandist Sergey Karaganov declared that BRICS was “the greatest success of the Russian Federation’s foreign policy” – in the context of the country’s exclusion from the G8. Since the start of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the adjustment of the Russian Federation’s foreign policy doctrines, under conditions of the complete destruction of relations with democratic Western states, has entailed particular attention to relations with the “global majority”. The Russian Federation has therefore continued to make considerable efforts to preserve its influence over the BRICS+ countries and actively prepared for its chairmanship. To prepare for the 16th BRICS+ summit in Kazan, an organising committee was set up, headed by Vladimir Putin’s foreign policy adviser Yury Ushakov. At his instigation, messages about a “just world order”, “multipolarity”, and the like were constantly injected into the information space – within the framework of the discourse on building a world in which the developed countries of the West would not have the decisive say. It is precisely this value orientation that is considered a precondition for considering membership applications from new candidates: support for the principles of multipolarity and the enhancement of the role of developing countries in global governance (although an informal decision was taken on a moratorium on admitting new members during the Russian chairmanship). Narratives about a “just world order” that would serve the interests of the “global majority” were emphasized by the Russian Federation even more than usual, particularly during the leaders’ summit in Kazan in October 2024.

Brazil’s chairmanship in 2025 did not bring about fundamental changes in the format’s activities; rather, it stabilized the work of BRICS+ after the enlargement. Brazil’s chairmanship focused on six key areas: global health cooperation; climate change; trade, investment, and finance; the multilateral peace and security architecture; artificial intelligence governance; and institutional development. Moreover, political developments and economic risks in 2025 confirmed that ongoing discussions on topical issues are extremely important for the Global South. In particular, Brazil’s BRICS chairmanship focused on more inclusive and comprehensive global governance and on the reform of the United Nations Security Council. Environmental policy also remained an important theme for Brazil, and in the final declaration following the meeting of foreign ministers in Rio de Janeiro in 2025, the problems of environmental protection occupied a special place.

In general, environmental issues are extremely sensitive for the states of this group, since the BRICS countries possess considerable natural potential and face serious environmental threats, the resolution of which is possible only through cooperation and the exchange of experience and technologies. At the same time, each BRICS+ state traditionally has its own specific problems and has accumulated experience in addressing them (for Brazil, it is the problem of tropical forests; for India, the preservation of biodiversity; for the PRC, the issue of disposing of industrial production waste). Within the framework of the Republic of India’s chairmanship in 2026, further expansion of cooperation in the sphere of “green energy” and sustainable development is planned.

2026: Chairmanship of Republic of India

On 12 December 2025, the chairmanship of BRICS+ officially passed to the Republic of India. The Indian sherpa Sudhakar Dalela stated that the country would continue the collective line of seeking consensus and new opportunities for cooperation: “Our chairmanship will be guided by the fundamental principles of continuity, consolidation and consensus, while we will respond to new global developments and the changing priorities of the Global South”. The sherpa also presented the priorities of the BRICS chairmanship for 2026: resilience, innovation, cooperation, and sustainable development.⁷ In April 2026, the BRICS+ Academic Forum convened in Delhi to develop

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recommendations for preserving the unity and effectiveness of the format, which had come under threat. India's chairmanship coincided with a new stage of escalation in the Middle East region, and this is a clear example of the challenges this format may face in the future.

The impact of international events on the work of the format is particularly palpable when they occur in the member countries themselves or in their immediate neighborhood. Thus, the military operation of the United States and Israel against Iran, as expected, somewhat overshadowed the two-day meeting of the foreign ministers of the BRICS group in New Delhi on 14-15 May. On the eve of the meeting, Iran called on India to use the BRICS+ platform to forge a consensus that would condemn the actions of the United States and Israel in the Middle East. The main disagreements arose between Iran and the UAE, which stand on opposite sides of the front line in this confrontation. Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi adopted a confrontational tone during the discussions, describing Iran as "a victim of illegal expansionism and militarism", and after the summit noted at a press conference that Iran "has no specific problems with the UAE, but this country has American facilities on its territory, which were the ones attacked". He called on BRICS+ to resist "Western hegemony and the US sense of impunity".⁸

Owing to this conflict of interests, India found itself in a difficult situation, all the more so since Iran had already had certain unofficial grievances against it over Narendra Modi's visit to Tel Aviv and his warm meeting with Benjamin Netanyahu just a day before the start of the US and Israeli military operation against the IRI. Despite this, the organizers of the meeting made every possible effort to secure a joint statement. On the sidelines of the summit, as is traditional, many important meetings took place (one of them between Abbas Araghchi and Sergey Lavrov), and there were no representatives of the PRC among the participants, which probably simplified the process of reaching consensus.

The work during the summit of foreign ministers is regarded as preparation for the forthcoming meeting of the leaders of the BRICS+ member countries in Delhi in September 2026. Despite the existing disagreements, the participants managed to agree on a final document comprising 63 paragraphs, albeit with certain reservations (expectedly, owing to the situation in the Middle East and India's reluctance to openly condemn Israel's aggression). For the most part, this document once again contains the traditional statements and slogans: reform of the UN and international financial institutions, the inadmissibility of illegal economic sanctions, condemnation of terrorism, the fight against climate change, sustainable development, and so on.⁹ The situation in individual regions and countries of the world was considered: Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Sudan, and Cuba – that is, the focus was once again evidently placed on the so-called Global South. However, the question remains topical: if the 10 members of BRICS+ cannot reach consensus among themselves, how can they unite that very Global South (over 130 countries)?

The renowned Indian analyst Harsh Pant frankly summed up this meeting: "The intensification of the confrontation between the United States and Israel, on the one hand, and Iran, on the other, turned the gathering into a vivid demonstration of the strategic fissures that are increasingly shaping the bloc. The meeting of foreign ministers... revealed the growing internal contradictions of the enlarged BRICS at a moment of acute geopolitical instability... The most striking evidence of these disagreements was the fact that the BRICS foreign ministers were unable to agree on a full joint communiqué".¹⁰

One of the challenges also remains Delhi's strategic line in general, aimed at cooperation in various formats. Thus, almost immediately after the meeting of the foreign ministers of the BRICS+ countries in Delhi, a meeting took place of the ministers of the member countries of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) (India, the United States, Japan, and Australia), which share concerns about China's growing power. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio was in India on a four-day visit to participate in the summit and to strengthen relations with New Delhi; he particularly emphasized the importance of a "free and open Indo-Pacific region". Beijing voiced reservations about this meeting and generally

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criticizes the Quad as a Cold War-style construct (all the more so since the parties agreed to establish a joint naval base in Fiji).

The tension observed at the summit in New Delhi is unlikely to disappear, and the main question remains – how to keep 10 nations in the same boat. For now, India's chairmanship at least ensures that the group remains anchored to constructive engagement rather than fully descending into geopolitical fragmentation. In India, BRICS+ is perceived as "a very important format that is changing the world, and efforts will be made to preserve and further develop it". At the same time, however, Indian diplomacy is not abandoning its line of "strategic autonomy", which is a continuation of its traditional neutrality. Within the framework of this line, cooperation in Western formats (the Quad, I2U2 (India, Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and the United States)) will continue, and this in no way helps to eliminate the contradictions with the PRC, so this challenge to the unity and consolidation of BRICS+ will remain in force.

Conclusions and Recommendations

- › Over the 20 years of its existence, BRICS+ has undergone a certain evolution and has proved the expediency of such a format as a platform for consultations and a mechanism for cooperation in various fields – amid the continuing uncertainty of the international architecture, both economic and political. Despite pessimistic forecasts, the format has not failed completely, although the degree of its effectiveness may be assessed differently depending on the particular sphere of activity. On the whole, most of the economies of the group's participants continue to demonstrate high growth rates and rapid social and technological change. Even in the face of significant security challenges, the countries have proved the resilience of their own regimes (Iran) and, accordingly, the ability to maintain relative stability.
- › At the same time, the claims of BRICS+ to represent all the countries of the so-called Global South are hardly justified, and the effective lobbying of the interests of all developing countries by the members of this group is equally doubtful. The reason lies in the existence of a considerable number of contradictions between member countries, which may be temporarily set aside for the sake of a demonstrative improvement in relations (India – China in 2025 against the backdrop of the US “tariff wars”), but may deteriorate rapidly owing to an aggravation of the regional situation (Iran – the UAE in 2026 over the crisis around the IRI). Different approaches to the geopolitical positioning of the format also persist; in particular, three important countries – India, Brazil, and South Africa – oppose a pronounced anti-Western orientation.
- › The history of the existence of BRICS+ has proved that changes within the format are possible, and that enlargement takes place with account taken of various factors – not only economic growth. Admittedly, no full member has yet left the club, but applications for accession have been withdrawn owing to a change of political power (Argentina) or suspended owing to regional contradictions (Saudi Arabia). It can be assumed that, in the event of substantial changes of a political nature, the participation of an individual state may become ineffective (potentially, the IRI and the RF). Under such conditions, BRICS+ will most likely continue to exist and adapt quickly to changes, since there are grounds for the existence of such a format: the global order still bears the hallmarks of uncertainty and is undergoing a profound transformation with a tilt towards multipolarity.
- › The Russo-Ukrainian war and the events in the Middle East have further underscored the need to reform the institutions of global governance. The demand of other countries for alternative structures is therefore logical and will remain relevant, all the more so since the BRICS+ countries do in fact have many positive examples of effective cooperation, primarily in humanitarian fields. Particular note should be taken of their persistent desire to change the international financial order – by launching de-dollarization mechanisms in their own countries with the aim of reducing the vulnerability of their economies under existing or potential Western sanctions. Such fragmentation of the global financial order creates significant challenges and threats, since it changes the logic of the actions of other actors (non-members of BRICS+) and fundamentally alters the existing balance of power.
- › For now, it is precisely the participation of the Russian Federation in this format that poses the greatest challenges for Ukraine – owing to its toxic influence, aggressive propaganda, and use of the format to promote its own narratives. The BRICS+ group has effectively served as a guarantor against the diplomatic isolation of the Russian Federation since the start of the Russo-Ukrainian war. Although in 2023 South Africa asked the Russian leader

not to attend the 15th BRICS summit because of the arrest warrant issued by the ICC for crimes committed in Ukraine, it is the states of this format that are the political and economic partners of the Russian Federation. These countries, primarily India and China, to a certain extent finance the war through the purchase of Russian energy resources and active trade in general. The Russian side also uses the BRICS+ countries to circumvent Western sanctions imposed after the full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

- › Accordingly, it is important for Ukraine to continue active work with each of the countries of the grouping and to devote greater attention to its information presence in the member states, in particular with the aim of clearly conveying its own position on the Russo-Ukrainian war and exposing the crimes of the Russian Federation (including those that may concern the BRICS+ countries, such as the theft of Ukrainian grain and attempts to sell it to these countries, notably Egypt). Ukraine needs to find mechanisms for conveying and discussing information about Russia's violations of the norms of international law and the UN Charter (to which the BRICS+ states are so fond of referring) and its counterproductive behavior even towards its own partners. While refraining from insistent advice (which is perceived in these states as diktat and, accordingly, will yield no result), it is nevertheless advisable for Ukraine to develop mutually beneficial economic relations with each individual country and, where possible, to intensify political dialogue with the aim of constantly and convincingly projecting a just image of our state.

¹ <https://fakty.com.ua/ua/svit/20250707-shho-take-briks-i-yaki-zavdannya-grupy/>

² <https://www.bitget.com/ru/news/detail/12560605346306>

³ <https://inkstickmedia.com/how-real-is-the-brics-challenge-to-reshuffle-the-world/>

⁴ https://globalaffairs.org/commentary/podcasts/brics-powerful-bloc-or-political-theater?gad_source=1&ga

⁵ <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/china-and-india-are-at-odds-over-brics-expansion/>

⁶ <https://www.timeslive.co.za/politics/2023-08-22-brics-summit-updates-sa/>

⁷ <https://brics.br/en/news/brasil-hands-over-brics-presidency-to-india>

⁸ <https://www.iranintl.com/en/202605147412>

⁹ <https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/41144>

¹⁰ <https://www.orfonline.org/research/the-brics-challenge-and-india-s-choices>

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