

# Future Challenges of Brics in the Context of the Russian- Ukraine War

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DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2023.7932>

Received: 10 July 2023; Revised: 17 August 2023; Accepted: 23 August 2023; Published: 23 September 2023

## ABSTRACT

The BRICS member states, consisting of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, have gained importance in the global economy. However, their response to the Russia-Ukraine war has raised questions about their commitment to territorial integrity and sovereignty. In the context of the Russian-Ukraine war, BRICS as an organization is predicted to face certain challenges that might create obstacles to securing and implementing a sustainable multilateral environment that will facilitate the emerging countries of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The article has put forward some concepts concerning political, economic, diplomatic, trade and security issues to analyze the future challenges of BRICS. The findings of this article suggest that BRICS, as a collective organ, needs to take coordinated measures to bring stability and mobility within its actions and policies. The article concludes that BRICS members must increase their collaboration collectively, or challenges might grow and cause failure within this multilateral system. BRICS member states must practice interconnectedness with strategic and policy connotations.

**Keywords:** BRICS, Russia-Ukraine War, Challenges of BRICS, Territorial Integrity, Global Priorities.

## INTRODUCTION

The acronym BRICS came into existence due to the profound contribution of Jim O’Neal, a distinguished economist from Goldman Sachs, who introduced this term in his noteworthy research paper titled “The Global Economy Requires Enhanced Economic BRICS” in 2001. In the document, O’Neal highlighted Brazil, Russia, India, and China as four burgeoning economies capable of ascending as significant global participants. O’Neal was motivated to coin the phrase after observing the swift economic ruthlessness exhibited by these four countries, an occurrence which he regarded as possessing considerable influence on the global economy. He perceived them as having the capacity to contest the hegemony of the Group of Seven (G7). The acronym BRIC gained rapid popularity and became extensively employed by experts and decision-makers to denote these four countries. In 2010, South Africa became a part of this group, consequently leading to a modification in the nomenclature to BRICS, mirroring the inclusion of the new country. The BRICS member states have emerged as significant stakeholders in the international economy, and this trend has persisted thus far. The continuing conflict in Ukraine has generated inquiries regarding the BRICS alliance, comprising these four prominent burgeoning economies, and their dedication to upholding the fundamental principles of honoring territorial integrity and sovereignty. The BRICS have faced significant examination due to their reaction regarding the Russia-Ukraine war. The BRICS consortium holds a significant position in the global arena; however, their fundamental beliefs have been scrutinized by various Western media outlets, member states in the European Union, and the United States, both as

separate entities and as a unified force. And this is particularly in light of the reluctance of numerous countries to overtly criticize Russia and their inclination to assume a nonpartisan stance, advocating for a discourse between Ukraine and Russia. The BRICS stance has been deciphered by experts and commentators as a tacit endorsement for Russia. However, several countries from the so-called developing economies are now following the lead of BRICS. Several countries have no desire to be involved in this ongoing conflict or strongly oppose being compelled to take sides in a war they did not initiate.

This article elucidates the contemporary position of BRICS amidst the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Does this conflict resemble the Iraq war that occurred ten years ago? Compelled countries to adopt stances contrary to their preferences, and can BRICS genuinely manifest as a representative force of the international sphere? The voting pattern observed at the United Nations General Assembly and the United Nations Security Council indicates a significant tendency for BRICS member states to align their votes primarily when collective interests converge. It can be observed that the historical voting trends of BRICS member states such as those on the deployment of nuclear weaponry at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), it demonstrates that the BRICS constituents and their voting patterns differ significantly. The absence of nuclear armaments in South Africa and Brazil underscores the significance of nuclear nonproliferation as a crucial focal point for both countries. In contrast, India, China, and Russia are considered nuclear powers and, therefore, take measures to safeguard their individual nuclear weapons strategy without compromise. Evidently, there is a disparity in their voting patterns in relation to these matters.

However, during the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the BRICS member states have exhibited diverse voting patterns in various United Nations votes based on the specific nature of the voting question. India and South Africa have predominantly refrained, except in situations involving a humanitarian dilemma, such as the act of slaughter. China has shown greater backing for the Russian perspective and has refrained from casting a vote on territorial unity and autonomy. This reflects the primary goal of the BRICS, which is to foster a fairer global system by exposing the Western countries' inconsistency and biased judgments. Indeed, before the 2022 BRICS summit, the foreign ministers of BRICS member states released a collective declaration emphasizing their endorsement of a diplomatic conversation between Russia and Ukraine. Additionally, they expressed their shared apprehensions concerning the ongoing humanitarian calamity that persists. The crucial aspect is that the BRICS countries did not adopt a unified stance on the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. They opted, instead, to retrieve their individual national stances. Nevertheless, despite South Africa and India expressing their criticism towards the Western countries for their inconsistent behavior, they are reluctant to explicitly denounce infringements upon the fundamental principles of territorial integrity and sovereignty committed by other members of the BRICS alliance. However, this fact is not deterring other countries in the developing regions from endeavoring to gain entry into the BRICS consortium. Most likely, the majority of these countries are inclined to adopt positions regarding a conflict that they did not contribute to initiating or have no desire to incite further.

The Russian foreign minister, Sergey Lavrov, has recently affirmed that more than twelve countries have officially submitted their applications to become part of the BRICS after the group's earlier resolution to welcome new members in 2022. In its present state, the BRICS coalition collectively represents roughly 40% of the global populace and nearly a quarter of the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The anticipated trajectory suggests that the GDP measurement is projected to multiply and reach the significant milestone of constituting 50% of the world's total GDP by the conclusion of the current decade. Enlarging the BRICS group will promptly expedite that progression. Regarding the expansion of BRICS, countries such as Algeria, Argentina, and Iran have all submitted applications for membership in the BRICS organization. There is existing knowledge that countries such as Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Egypt, Afghanistan, and Indonesia, demonstrate a keen interest in the matter. At the previous year's G20 summit held in Bali, BRICS officially submitted a formal request to initiate the process of becoming a member. Additional potential candidates for membership encompass Kazakhstan, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Senegal, Thailand, and the

United Arab Emirates. Each of these countries had their economic ministers in attendance at the BRICS enlargement discourse conducted in May. For South Africa, being a part of BRICS is crucial for its foreign policy objectives. This platform offers an extra opportunity for South Africa to exert its influence beyond expectations in global matters.

Under the leadership of the present president, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, who initially established the BRICS alliance two decades ago, this holds specifically for Brazil. He perceives this alliance as a comparable mechanism to enhance Brazil's prominence internationally and establish collaborative alliances with other major global entities. Indeed, immediately following his present tenure as president, Lula embarked on a journey to China, where he received a lavish reception. During his sojourn in China, he unabashedly rebuked the United States, urging it to rouse itself and discern the global actuality that no impartial intermediary country is inclined to adopt a stance on this seemingly interminable conflict. That declaration was not well received in the United States. This conflict poses an existential threat to Europe and even NATO, yet many regions in the global South demonstrate indifference towards this warfare.

In the context of India, the BRICS framework enhances its influence and developmental difficulties among other countries in the southern hemisphere. Additionally, it facilitates interaction and collaboration with China, a country with which India has engaged in armed conflict. India maintains that there is a persistent territorial disagreement, and in a broader and more collaborative environment concerning matters of mutual concern, it considers this platform as an opportunity to sustain harmonious interactions with China. Furthermore, it is imperative to note that for China, the BRICS platform serves as a mechanism to heighten its exertions as a prominent, dominant global power on a multifaceted international platform. The BRICS alliance also perceives itself as a proponent for reshaping the international framework that has predominantly favored the Western powers. Whether it pertains to the United Nations and its diverse entities or establishments like the Bretton Woods institutions like the World Bank and the IMF, this prolonged conflict progressively undermines other crucial global priorities such as sustainable development, climate change, and more. Russia's actions have likewise established a precedent akin to the manner in which the United States invasion of Iraq did a decade ago. Dominant countries must not disregard the fundamental concepts of maintaining territorial boundaries and upholding autonomous governance. And if they do, there will be severe repercussions to follow. Once again, after a decade, this conflict is imposing exceedingly difficult decisions on countries that may not be inclined to instigate or align themselves with either Russia or Ukraine until a ceasefire is observed.

## **Problem Statement**

**Assessing the Influence of Diplomatic Strains on BRICS Collaboration:** What are the forthcoming hurdles encountered by BRICS in sustaining cooperation and tackling mutual goals in light of the intensifying diplomatic tensions stemming from the Russian-Ukraine war?

**The Extended Financial Consequences of the Russian-Ukraine War on BRICS Economies:** To what extent will the monetary aftermath of the ongoing Russian-Ukraine war affect the fiscal steadfastness, commercial affiliations, and investment potential of the BRICS member states, and which measures can be adopted to alleviate these repercussions?

**Energy Stability amidst Geopolitical Turmoil:** What are the possible obstacles and perils that BRICS countries might confront in the assurance of energy supplies due to the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine? Furthermore, how can these countries collaboratively strive towards protecting their energy concerns and expanding their range of energy sources?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Many experts have explained the challenges of BRICS in the coming decades. However, there needs to be

more appropriate literature on the difficulties of BRICS in the context of the Russian-Ukraine war. This area has a research gap, so scholars have given their explanation based on their understanding, data, or experience from a multilateral perspective instead of an area perspective (specifically on the Russia-Ukraine issue). As the Russian-Ukraine war stands today at its one-year completion, some challenges are already in sight. Nevertheless, several challenges are predicted to emerge in the future.

**Sergunin (2020)** pointed out that Russia is interested in BRICS to avoid sanctions of all kinds and isolation on international platforms. In this context, **Roren (2023)** states that when a particular country engages in a war or war-like situation, they don't seek recognition or support from powerful states. Instead, they work on getting approval from 'social clubs of world politics'. These clubs are a group of states, organizations and communities that support Russia and engage in any form of integration with it. BRICS is an appropriate example of such 'social clubs' as BRICS member states are already supporting Russia despite its violation of human rights and countering any notion by the West that challenges Russia.

**Hooijmaaijers (2021)** explains that China wants to integrate BRI with BRICS to assert itself as the leader in multilateral cooperation. Similarly, **Gouvea and Gutierrez (2023)** believe that, for China, BRICS and BRI are 'interconnected'. The authors acknowledge that the Chinese ideology of interconnectedness may be necessary to welcome emerging countries into the BRICS. China's strategy may invite a clash of interests with India. Already a Pacific ally of the United States of America, India's position in the BRICS is understood to be influenced by economic factors. However, by joining an organization connected with the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), India will be challenging its relations with the US and its long ideological clash with China. However, there is a less likely option for India to accept this notion. India's diplomatic endeavors suggest there are possibilities to enhance economic partnership with its foes; however, being a member of a Chinese-dominant organization is highly unlikely.

While analyzing Brazil's perspective, **Pomar and Pomar (2015)** explain that Brazil has kept itself neutral in the Crimea and Ukraine issues to expand its agricultural business in Russia. **Fernandas et al. (2021)** analyze Brazil's position through public opinion. They conclude that Brazil is optimistic about BRICS for balancing purposes rather than economic reasons. It is understood that, as BRICS is a non-Western multilateralism, Brazilians believe the country can sustain and develop in a 'South-South' organization like BRICS. **Stuenkel (2013)** predicts that finding common ground among powerful states like China, Russia, and India will be challenging for Brazil as they tend to articulate their interests more than the less powerful and emerging countries.

**Harrison (2014)** attempted to explore the causes of South Africa's role in BRICS by explaining some challenges that South Africa might face in the future. This included whether South Africa would be recognized by other African states as a gateway to global integration. Like Brazil, South Africa might face tougher competition with other powerful countries under BRICS. Likewise, **Ozodike (2010)** predicted that South Africa's BRICS card would significantly challenge African countries, as many African states are better positioned than South Africa.

**Junior and Branco (2022)** tried to analyze the relationship of BRICS members with Russia by evaluating their voting attitudes at the United Nations. Russia has been utilizing the BRICS members to vote for Russia in any notion that concerns the Russian-Ukraine war. Their analysis suggests that BRICS members were more interested in supporting Russia than aligning with Western countries, who oppose Russia due to its position on Ukraine. Although BRICS member states oppose the war, they hope to strengthen their 'commercial and strategic' partnership with Russia in the future. However, **Mostafa and Mahmood (2015)** believe that the BRICS members are not yet integrated due to their differences and lack of common ground. They contemplate that cooperation under BRICS is challenging when issues of cultural and language barriers, rivalries, and conflicts are on the table.

Most recently, another BRICS member state, India, announced that it would conduct its trade in rupees with Bangladesh. China and Russia are also following the same strategy to conduct transactions in their



respective currencies. Such a trend that took place after the Russian-Ukraine war imposes significant challenges upon the BRICS members, as members are confident to transact within the parameters of their member states and undermine the dominance of the Western system. **Ahmadi (2022)** believes such a drastic measure might have devastating implications because the world is unprepared for a significant financial change. With sanctions and 'isolated' trades, inflation may skyrocket.

**Aslanyürek (2023)** has discussed several challenges that BRICS might face in the near future. Among them, the issue of heterogeneity and a lack of action policy might weaken the possibilities for BRICS. He mentioned the term 'heterogeneity' to explain the difference among the states in terms of economic, political, geographical, and demographic issues, etc. Furthermore, BRICS, since its formation, has held several summits. The world has yet to see any implications of policies that might indicate the completion of BRICS ambitions to challenge the existing world order. Likewise, **Duggan et al. (2022)** conclude that the impact of BRICS is "limited" until trust building and practical cooperation are ensured. Both **Aslanyürek (2023)** and **Duggan et al. (2022)** addressed the challenges of BRICS as a multilateral entity, not from a singular point of view. Their study lacks an investigation of the Russian-Ukraine war's impact on BRICS member states. However, recent articles on this issue suggest that BRICS member countries have supported Russia directly or indirectly on various occasions. **Schrim (2023)** worked on finding the answers to the gap in the BRICS-Russian-Ukraine study. His study suggests that the emergence of a 'Political South', also known as emerging countries, will consider a 'double track' strategy, meaning countries under the BRICS will maintain connections with Russia and the West depending on their purpose of interest.

It is essential to point out that right after Russia invaded Ukraine, the Western countries, particularly the United States of America and its Western allies, implemented economic sanctions and encouraged others to counter Russia on the grounds of military intervention and human rights. Many news portals and news channels have published articles or broadcast news to highlight the atrocities committed by Russia in Ukraine. However, there is a lack of appropriate academic literature to understand BRICS's position and importance in the context of the Russia-Ukraine war. Although BRICS faced particular challenges before the Russian-Ukraine war, there needs to be more literature and research on the new challenges that might occur in near future. The objective of this article is to focus on understanding and explaining the challenges BRICS will face in the aftermath of the Russian-Ukraine war.

## METHODOLOGY

To assess the future challenges and socio-economic competitive edge of the BRICS member states, this research has opted to employ some indicators outlined by the several review papers and has concentrated on the subsequent quintet of factors: diplomatic tensions, balance of interests, geopolitical and financial investments, security of energy along with ideological differences, and international relations (specifically maintaining unity and applications to humanitarian crisis) derived from some academic articles and evaluative investigation. The primary data source utilized in this research is derived from secondary data acquired from diverse origins. The choice of resources is determined by their trustworthiness, pertinence, and excellence. The subsequent sources that have been employed are as follows:

**Literature Surveys:** An extensive examination of scholarly papers was undertaken to procure insights and analysis from proficient authorities in the respective domain. These scholarly articles comprehensively comprehend the geopolitical intricacies, economic ramifications, and plausible hurdles connected to the Russia-Ukraine war concerning the BRICS member states.

**Annual Report 2021 of the BRICS Business Council:** The publication by the BRICS Business Council presents invaluable perspectives on the economic collaboration among the constituent countries. This analysis elucidates the current obstacles and potential advantageous prospects within the BRICS consortium and can aid in discerning the imminent consequences of the war between Russia and Ukraine.

**BRICS Investment Report:** The report on investments in the BRICS countries provides intricate examination and information concerning investment tendencies and patterns within the BRICS member states. This report offers discernment into the prospective ramifications of the Russia-Ukraine war on foreign direct investments (FDIs) within BRICS.

The ILO website was the source of statistical data and information on employment, labor markets, and worldwide economic patterns. This data aids in comprehending the possible socio-economic ramifications of the war between Russia and Ukraine on the BRICS member states.

Information from these diverse sources is gathered and displayed structured to validate the assertions coherently. Furthermore, alongside the examination of the supplementary data, the investigation also incorporated data obtained from scholarly publications, newspaper editorials, and research studies disseminated by various renowned research institutions. In this article, valuable insights regarding the future challenges and limitations of the BRICS were garnered by gathering data from the online platforms of various public and private institutions.

**Future Challenges of BRICS: Russia-Ukraine War**

The BRICS member states have been significantly impacted by the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine, both individually and collectively. The difficulties that the BRICS member states will probably encounter in the future due to this struggle are identified and examined in this article. These difficulties include ideological divergences, economic effects, energy security, security issues, and diplomatic problems. The article makes the case that to create solutions that benefit all parties involved, the BRICS member states will need to cooperate.

**Diplomatic Tensions**

The diplomatic ties between Russia and several other BRICS member states, notably India, which has historically had close ties to Russia, have been strained due to the Russian-Ukraine war. Since the Cold War era, India has maintained a non-alignment policy while attempting to balance its interactions with powerful countries. India is in a challenging position due to the crisis since it wants to preserve its ties with Russia while supporting Ukraine’s independence.

Like other countries, China has upheld a policy of non-interference in other countries’ internal affairs while also attempting to increase its influence in the area. China is likewise in a challenging position due to the crisis as it tries to avoid taking sides while simultaneously keeping cordial ties with both Russia and Ukraine.

**Financial Effects**

The BRICS member states have not been exempted from the effects of the Russian-Ukraine war on the world economy. Given that Russia is one of the largest economies in the organization, any interruption there might have repercussions for other members. Russia’s commercial connections with other countries, especially the BRICS countries, have been impacted by the sanctions the West has placed on it.

**Table 01: Overview of Commerce Between Russia and The Other BRICS Countries**

	Russian exports	Russian imports	Commercial balance
Brazil	Potassic fertilizers (US\$813M)	Soybeans (US\$ 354 M)	
	Nitrogenous fertilizers (US\$640M)	Frozen bovine meat (US\$ 214 M)	
	Mixed mineral or chemical fertilizers (US\$434M)	Aluminum oxide (US\$ 128 M)	
	Total: US\$ 2.98 B / RNK 32	Total: US\$ 1.73 B / RNK 28	

India	Crude petroleum (US\$ 1.11 B)	Packages medicaments (US\$ 505M)	
	Coal briquettes (US\$ 647 M)	Broadcasting equipment (US\$ 465M)	
	Diamonds (US\$ 591 M)	Tea (US\$ 107 M)	
	Total: US\$ 6.76 B / RNK 15	Total: US\$ 3.15 B / RNK 18	Total: + US\$ 3.61 B
China	Crude petroleum (US\$ 33.7 B)	Broadcasting equipment (US\$ 4.1 B)	
	Refines petroleum (US\$ 3.34 B)	Computers (US\$ 2.13 B)	
	Sawn wood (US\$ 2.52 B)	Vehicle parts (US\$ 1 B)	
	Total: US\$ 58.1 B / RNK 1	Total: US\$ 47.1 B / RNK 1	Total: + US\$ 11 B
South Africa	Copper wire (US\$ 517M)	Inorganic salts (US\$ 111M)	
	Wheat (US\$ 92.9 M)	Manganese ore (US\$ 102 M)	
	Mixed mineral or chemical fertilizers (US\$ 51.8 M)	Citrus (US\$ 92.9 M)	
	Total: US\$ 494 M / RNK 72	Total: US\$ 648 M / RNK 50	Total: – US\$ 154 B

*\*Source: The Observatory of Economic Complexity (2022).*

Initially, they can autonomously fund all of their imported expenditures. In 2022, as a shared outcome, the BRICS member states encountered a positive trade balance, commonly known as a surplus in the balance of payments, amounting to \$387 billion. The primary contributor to this surplus was China. However, if a particular country consistently contributes a significant proportion of import expenses, it will establish an imperceptible hegemony of that country over the BRICS alliance. Therefore, it is crucial to ensure the balanced involvement of BRICS member states to uphold a positive trade balance.

**Table 02: GDP Estimation of BRICS Countries 2023 & 2028**

	Projected in 2023	Projected in 2028	Rate of growth in 2028
Brazil	\$2.08 Trillion	\$2.75 Trillion	32.21%
Russia	\$2.06 Trillion	\$2.27 Trillion	10.19%
India	\$3.76 Trillion	\$5.57 Trillion	48.14%
China	\$19.37 Trillion	\$27.5 Trillion	41.97%
South Africa	\$399.01 Billion	\$468.56 Billion	17.43%

*\*Source: IMF Estimation (GDP) Report and Statista Graph 2023*

Table 02 illustrates that Russia holds the least favorable position in GDP growth rate in 2028 among the BRICS member states, as per the forecasted GDP report published by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This implies that the war between Russia and Ukraine has the potential to yield unfavorable repercussions on Russia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Therefore, the minimal level of participation

emanating from Russia will impede the prospective advancement of BRICS’s overarching objective. Furthermore, Russia sustains an adverse Natural Increase Rate of Population, equivalent to -7.1%. Therefore, the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine will contribute to a decline in the Natural Increase Rate of Population. Consequently, the quantity of prospective human capital will diminish to uphold heightened productivity and ingenuity. Specifically, there is no alternative to stop the Russia-Ukraine war if BRICS want to establish Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 17 among BRICS member states.

### Security of Energy

Many of the BRICS member states rely heavily on Russia as a source of energy; therefore, any disruption in this country’s energy supplies might have a negative impact on these countries. For example, China’s rapidly expanding economy mainly depends on Russian gas and oil imports. India has also been attempting to diversify its energy sources, although it still depends on importing Russian oil and gas.

**Table 03: Investment between the BRICS and Russia**

	Russian Investments	Investments in Russia
<b>Brazil</b>	Energy resources (Rosnefit, Gazprom) Mining (Serverstal) \$1.5B (2019)	Food (JBS) Manufacturing (WEG)
<b>India</b>	Telecommunications (AFK) Automotive sector (Kamaz) \$18B	Energy resources (ONGC, GAIL) \$13B (2017)
<b>China</b>	Energy resources (Rosnefit, Gazprom)	Energy resources (Sinopec, CNPC) Telecommunications (Huawei) \$12B (2016)
<b>South Africa</b>	Mining (Renova, OAO Serversta) Energy resources (RosGeo) Automotive sector (Kamaz) \$1.5B (2019)	Beverage (SAB Miller) Technology (Naspers) Heavy Industry (Bateman, Bell) \$5B (2019)

*\*Source: The Moscow Trade Center, the Russian Embassy in the Republic of South Africa, the Indian Embassy in Russia, and Stronski and NG (2018).*

### Ideological Differences

The BRICS countries’ conflict has brought to light their ideological disagreements, particularly regarding how they adhere to international norms and laws. Russia has been accused of disregarding the principles of



international law by violating Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. However, China and India have not been as outspoken in criticizing Russia, indicating that the BRICS member states hold divergent opinions on territorial integrity and sovereignty.

Individuals who possess knowledge of Mikhail Bulgakov's "The White Guard" will be aware of the solidarity demonstrated by the Russians and Ukrainians during the Bolshevik Revolution as they united to confront external adversaries. In the midst of the Second World War, both countries relinquished their distinct national identities and joined in combat against external acts of aggression. The dissimilarities among Wales, Scotland, and England are insignificant compared to the profound connection experienced between a Russian and a Ukrainian. Despite of the disparities in language, territorial heterogeneity, and cultural distinctions among the BRICS member states, the organization has effectively upheld a harmonious consensus of perspective. It has maintained its operational importance while recognizing the intrinsic variety.

### **Security Concerns**

The war has sparked apprehension about regional security, specifically regarding the possibility of a larger-scale conflict involving other countries. The international community has widely criticized Russia's seizure of Crimea, and there are concerns that this action could establish a harmful example for other global conflicts.

### **International Relations**

The war between Russia and Ukraine has strained Russia's relationships with Western countries, and the BRICS will have to manage the consequences of this strain in their international relations. The BRICS will need to find a way to maintain good relations with Russia and the West while avoiding getting embroiled in the conflict. During the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit, President Xi Jinping expressed China and Russia's commitment to fulfill their distinctive obligations as influential global forces in the forthcoming years. This implies that the Western countries should not disregard Russia's position as a significant global force and should employ their authority to attain a harmonious and diplomatic resolution to the ongoing Russian-Ukraine war. Alternatively, the imminent specter of armed conflict will persistently intensify, culminating in additional volatility and adverse repercussions.

### **Humanitarian Crisis**

The Russian-Ukraine war has caused a humanitarian crisis, which has displaced thousands of people who require assistance. The BRICS need to contribute to resolving this crisis by providing humanitarian aid to those in need.

### **Maintaining Unity**

One of the major difficulties that the BRICS face due to the Russian-Ukraine war, is the need to preserve their unity. Even though Russia is a member of the BRICS, Brazil, India, China, and South Africa have opted for a more neutral position. It is crucial for the BRICS to maintain their coherence and prevent the conflict from undermining their cooperation.

### **Balancing Interests**

The BRICS have varying interests in the Russian-Ukraine war. Russia is directly involved, while China, India, and Brazil have economic connections with both Russia and Ukraine. South Africa has adopted a mostly neutral stance. The challenge for the BRICS is to balance their interests carefully and avoid showing favoritism towards either side of the conflict.

The conflict between Russia and Ukraine has been ongoing for several years, with various political and

territorial disputes between the two countries. In February 2022, Russia invaded Ukrainian territory, which led to consequences for the government of Vladimir Putin and its economic partners, including six sanction packages and the reorganization of international commerce. The Western bloc has sought to isolate and weaken Russia since the war began. However, the BRICS countries have been less likely to condemn Russia's actions and have maintained commercial and strategic partnerships with Moscow. While they do not support the war, they do not believe in interventions and sanctions, particularly driven by the United States, against countries that defy the reigning liberal order. The BRICS countries have not adhered to Western sanctions against Russia and have intensified their commercial relationships with the country. In this way, the BRICS countries have positioned themselves distinctively from the Western powers, hoping to maintain their autonomy and international prominence as alternative poles of power. Despite the Western efforts to weaken Russia's economy and suffocate its military efforts, the BRICS member states believe there are opportunities to be taken advantage of in the present and the future after the end of this war, which they conceive of as pro-Russian neutrality. Therefore, the Russian Federation is not completely isolated within the international system.

## CONCLUSION

The BRICS member states are confronted with a multitude of obstacles necessitating collaborative endeavors and strategic collaboration. The essay illuminates significant obstacles such as the war in Ukraine, economic penalties targeting Russia, cyber warfare, reliance on commodities, and the necessity for a global system promoting multiple power centers. These obstacles bear significant consequences for the BRICS economies and their proficiency in cooperating efficiently.

Increased economic penalties against Russia not only exert an influence on the Russian economy but also have consequences for other BRICS member states that maintain connections with Russia. The disturbance of economic activities and an impediment to growth possibilities require cautious maneuvering of this situation to safeguard their economies while also exploring channels for ongoing collaboration.

The ongoing war in Ukraine has intensified strained relations between the Western countries and Russia, leading to challenges in fostering mutual understanding and fruitful cooperation among the BRICS member states. However, it is imperative for them to rise above geopolitical disparities and cultivate discourse to tackle the fundamental origins of the strife, advocate for tranquility, and ascertain enduring resolutions that yield advantages for all entities engaged.

With the rise of cyber warfare posing a growing menace in an interconnected global landscape, BRICS member states must give utmost importance to enhancing their cyber fortifications both independently and collaboratively. By improving the standards for protecting against cyber threats, collaborating on effective strategies, and facilitating the exchange of valuable information, it is possible to fortify the defense of critical infrastructure and uphold a sense of confidence and reliance within the collective.

The significant dependence of BRICS member states on the exportation of commodities exposes them to risks associated with fluctuations in global commodity prices. It is crucial to prioritize the diversification of economies to foster resilience and ensure sustainable development. The BRICS member states can enhance their self-reliance on resources by allocating funds towards domains such as technology, advancements, production, and expertise, thereby diminishing their reliance on natural resources. This strategic move will facilitate the generation of job prospects and cultivate enduring economic equilibrium.

The BRICS member states need to identify pathways for intensified collaboration, particularly during periods of emergency. The war in Ukraine has brought attention to the necessity of establishing a global order that is more diverse and balanced, allowing the BRICS member states to assume significant leadership roles. By showcasing solidarity, harnessing their combined leverage, and championing an impartial and

comprehensive global governance framework, the BRICS can actively contribute to fostering a more harmonious and just international arrangement. The BRICS member states must undertake tangible measures to tackle the obstacles presented by the war in Ukraine and other pertinent matters. Alleviating the economic repercussions of the war can be attained by examining substitute trade pathways and fostering intra-BRICS commerce and investment. Facilitating constructive communication and fostering negotiations between Russia and Western countries holds immense importance in mitigating tensions and discovering diplomatic resolutions.

The role of BRICS member states is vital in maintaining stability and peace in the current paradigm shift in international politics. It is high time for the member states to focus on creating a positive environment for cooperation and sustaining the challenges. Jiejun (2023) believes that BRICS members, on the one hand, are concerned about the humanitarian situation of Ukraine, and on the other hand, concerned about the sanctions, stability of trade and investments. The 'soft balancing' tactic might be an appropriate alternative to maintain diplomatic ties in the present political climate. T. V. Paul explains that soft balancing is not concerned with military deterrence. Instead, multilateralism, diplomacy and economic connections can proliferate bilateral or multilateral engagement. By using alternative options, less aggressive countermeasures can be ensured. The geopolitical factor is a significant challenge for BRICS members in the coming days. More importantly, three countries- Russia, China and India will become probable superpowers. This means an ideological and political clash is imminent, and member states will face political dilemmas and strategic challenges. To bypass such issues, members need to focus on improving BRICS more elaborately and practically to work more efficiently, like the United Nations General Assembly.

Moreover, it is imperative for the BRICS member states to allocate considerable focus towards enhancing their cyber security measures by means of exchanging relevant knowledge, collaboratively engaging in thorough research, and fortifying their overall capabilities. Initiatives to broaden their economies, encourage ground-breaking advancements, and allocate resources towards human potential will aid in diminishing susceptibility to external disruptions and promoting enduring progress. In essence, the obstacles encountered by the BRICS member states necessitate combined efforts and deliberate collaboration. By attending to the fiscal repercussions of the war, promoting constructive discussions, fortifying cyber defense, broadening their economic portfolios, and advocating for a global order with multiple power centers, the BRICS member states can effectively tackle these obstacles and construct a more affluent and secure future. By means of enduring cooperation and tenacity, the BRICS members hold the potential to fortify their standing as principal contributors to the formation of the global environment, ultimately strengthening their prominence and influence.

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