

## **BRICS' Path Explorations**

### **In International Peace and Security Dilemmas**

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Behind the overall peace of the international situation lies a multifold of conventional and nonconventional security issues that are aggravating international security situation and bringing new challenges to the UN mechanism of collective security.

Challenges come from two fronts, i.e., the innate deficiency and external constraints. In terms of innate deficiencies, the international security mechanism is made to keep balance of interests; hence compromise is its inborn nature. But the seeking of compromise is enough to undermine the authority and efficiency of the mechanism. Moreover, the existing international security mechanism takes its root in the West; Western countries set the tone for building international mechanisms and are the major practitioners. This, therefore, leads to the narrowness of the theory, application and political foundation of the international security mechanism.

In terms of external constraints, the fundamental feature of nation states era still remains today. Even in this globalized world, countries still put relative gains over absolute gains and national interests continue to be a top priority for all countries to safeguard and seek. Therefore, when it comes to the goal of collective security, by its selfishness, the nation states will pursue self-interests naturally. It is fair to say that the current international security mechanism is flawless as an ideal but unreachable in practice.

We cannot help but asking will the BRICS, as emerging economic and political force, be able to respond to the current international security mechanism and have its own stance in global governance? In a word, will BRICS have a say on issues concerning peace and security, and if so, how?

#### **The rising of BRICS and global governance**

The impact of BRICS countries goes far beyond the economic arena. We have more say on international affairs, which has changed

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the extremely unequal discourse power between Northern and Southern countries.

Since the first day we gathered together, BRICS countries have upheld the purpose of safeguarding the interests of this organization and the interests of developing countries. It is our shared hope to change the unfair global economic and political system by tapping into the influence of BRICS. We all hope to create a favorable external environment and find a short cut to the solution of problems by capitalizing on our strength in unity.

However, the status and role of BRICS have structural constraints. Our real gap with Western countries is our serious flaws in internal structures. We still have the hallmarks of developing countries and transitional economies and have weaknesses in the quality and sustainability of our socioeconomic and governance structures. China's overdependence on foreign trade and poor economic quality unmatched with its large economic aggregate constrains China from making further impact on global governance. Brazil's over-reliance on natural resources and lack of investment capabilities, Russia's fiscal and financial vulnerabilities to the bumps of world energy prices, and India's lack of competitiveness in infrastructure and manufacturing all lead to the same problem: the more we are involved in global governance, the more our structural deficiencies are laid bare.

What is more, the homogeneous nature of BRICS economic structures naturally leads to competition, making it hard to come up with stable and effective consultation mechanisms for global affairs, nor regional governance. The geopolitical factors add to the difficulties of institutionalization. Countries with too much proximity may have geopolitical rivalry, while countries totally distant from each other geographically could hardly find common goals. Differences in political systems may also aggravate disparities in economic structures and add frictions.

Therefore, we must be sober minded that we have more internal problems to be solved rather than external ones.

### **To consolidate the political foundation**

On the other hand, modern political theories based on nation state are diluted due to the inability of nation states to safeguard the security of society and people. The main reason is the absence of a new political ecology as institutional guarantee. Therefore, only by developing a new security model can it be possible to deal with various security issues.

A new security model needs a new political foundation to match it. We have called for seeking security through development, equality,

mutual trust, and innovation, which can well serve as the political foundation for such a model. Turning into action plan, it means equality, mutual trust, tolerance, mutual-learning and win-win cooperation in dealing with international relations.

Mutual trust is the essential condition for the political foundation. To establish mutual trust one must transcend ideological differences and differences in social systems and abandon the mentality and mindset of imposing one's ideologies and values onto others. We must realize that given the divergences in various cultures, social systems and development stages, disaccords and disagreement are inevitable. Due to various reasons, development in the world is not a balanced one. Countries varies in their pace of development. Changes in the dynamics of national strength do not constitute threat to international security.

Cooperation is the fundamental route to consolidate the political foundation. The international peace and security mechanism came into being as a result of policy coordination between governments. Such a mechanism often demonstrates the nature of public goods. Although the precondition for the establishment of international mechanism is that countries active in certain areas have some common interests that can only be realized through cooperation, yet common interests does not necessarily mean cooperation. That is to say, common interest is the necessary but not sufficient condition for cooperation among us. We have to further build up our will of cooperation. We should say, cooperation is not sacrificing one's own interests or imposing one's will on others, nor going into alliance targeting a third country or hurting the common interests of mankind.

In other words, we share not only common interests but also threats. To develop itself, a country must also allow other countries to develop. To seek its own security, a country must also let others to feel safe.

### **The Super Third Force**

Suppose the shortcomings within the BRICS framework are overcome and the political foundation is solid, how do we find a pragmatic roadmap to cooperate? Do we need to repeat the job already done by the existing international mechanism, or should we try to make claims as replacement of the old system when we are already part of the global governance structure and major players in the international peace and security mechanism?

In the field of international relations we need to pay more attention to the impact of political and economic situation as well as cultural and ethical factors of a country on its external behaviors.

Countries often turn to alliance and balance of power to realize their own interests, while diplomacy is the invisible hand directing political actions of a country. This is like playing billiard ball. Each country is a ball on the table, while diplomats are the players. What they care is interactions between the balls with total ignorance of inner structures of the balls, and the result is a record of series of failures. Therefore, when our government and market systems are faced with difficulties, we have to find a way out.

In recent years, some non-state actors, i.e. international NGOs known as the "super third force" is playing a more and more important role in the democratization of global governance as a supplement to state actors. International NGOs could help change the jungle law long existing in international political struggles. This helps create a more democratic, transparent and benign international environment. In terms of international peace and security, international NGOs are more resilient than governmental organizations, which can lower the cost of solving conflicts and helps promote international peace. Due to their participation, the concept of security has begun to extend from the high-politics to the low-politics. The emergence of international NGOs has provided new thoughts on tackling security issues.

Actually, many NGOs interact formally with IGOs. For instance, more than 3000 NGOs actively consult with various agencies of the extensive UN system or hold parallel conferences with IGO meetings to which states send representatives. Such partnerships between NGOs and IGOs enable both types to work together in pursuit of common policies and programs.

The outlines of a future type of dual global system may be coming into view, driven simultaneously both by the continuing importance of relations between states and by the growing impact of multiple cross-border transactions and channels of communication among non-state actors.

## Conclusion

We miss out the fact that the western countries remain in control of the high politics of international peace and security are badly affected by the external NGO pressures, the impact of NGO pressure on global policy making might lead to far-reaching transformational reforms in the conduct of international relations.

The BRICS is already a non state actor like a coin with two sides. On one side, it is an IGO which works very well in many fields after it was born several years ago. On the other side, it should also be a NGO which is largely ignored in the past few years. The think tank meeting as a Track Two is simply an academic platform with no sign to show

that will develop into a NGO with BRICS characteristics.

Could it be possible for the NGOs with global visions from BRICS countries to form a cooperation mechanism, or a total fresh NGO, like Green Peace or Doctors Without Borders, be exclusively established within BRICS countries? Such a newborn platform might be marginalized or semi-marginalized at every beginning, but it's set to be strengthened with social progress and will greatly contribute to cementing the political foundation for mutual trust among us, to promoting the new concept of security, to creating sound atmosphere for peace making, and to serving the rest of the world with experiences of the five countries.

Last, but not least, it'll definitely be inspiring for improving the BRICS cooperation mechanism.