

# Lies and Censorship Will Not Stop the BRICS

by Harley Schlanger

*This article first appeared in the German newspaper, Neue Solidarität, Sept. 7, 2023.*

If you reside in the Global North, it is likely that you know almost nothing truthful about the BRICS summit, which took place in Johannesburg, South Africa, from August 22 to 24. The summit is part of a tectonic shift in global affairs, in which nations in the Global South are making it clear they will no longer tolerate the anti-development policies imposed on them by the colonial powers of the North for centuries, and will use the BRICS—and other multilateral institutions, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Eurasian Economic Forum—as a means to overcome their subordination.

The summit provided an alternative for peaceful, cooperative development for the world, inspiring hopes of a better future for billions of people living in countries subjected to predatory looting for centuries. The Schiller Institute's chairwoman, Helga Zepp-LaRouche, who has a long history of fighting, alongside her late husband Lyndon LaRouche, for economic justice for all nations, greeted the results of the summit with great enthusiasm. In an interview on August 30, she described the proceedings as “a breakthrough for all of mankind, because it is the desire of the majority of the countries of the Global South to end a system which began really about 1500 with colonial-

ism, and which kept these countries of the Global South in significant underdevelopment—denying them their innate rights to develop like all other human beings and nations on the planet.”

Her enthusiasm is shared by leaders of many nations of the South, which are lining up to join the BRICS. In Johannesburg, six new members were added: Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia and Argentina, while it is reported that as many as forty other nations wish to join. The excitement generated was typified by President Luis Arce of Bolivia, who announced the intent of his nation to join the BRICS. He said membership “allows nations to access international markets without having to compromise their dignity, and without political conditions, sanctions or militaristic intimidation,” referencing the brutal treatment dealt by multinational corporate and financial interests to poorer nations in the present neoliberal, neocolonial system.

The uphill fight for dignity and justice was a theme throughout the deliberations. For example, in his speech, President Xi Jin-

ping of China described the BRICS as committed to fight against “economic coercion,” and demanded that “all nations have an equal say in writing international rules,” a thinly veiled slap at the oft-repeated mantra of U.S. Secretary of State Blinken, who speaks of defending the “Rules-Based Order” from



Plurinational Legislative Assembly

*Despite pressures from the Global North, President Luis Arce of Bolivia has just announced the intent of his nation to join the BRICS.*

“authoritarian regimes.” Xi described the present system as one in which “Whoever develops well, they want to contain; whoever catches up, they want to hinder,” sentiments assuredly shared by all nations thwarted in their pursuit of economic development.

### **Censoring Current History**

Yet, in the press in the “Global North,” this huge story was either ignored, or distorted, to provoke fear that the process which unfolded was an open attack on “democracy,” if not a “communist” plot to undermine freedom. While it is not a big surprise to discover that the mainstream western media engages in censorship and spreads lies about significant strategic developments, the “reporting” on last week’s summit offers an outrageous example of using “narrative creation” to promote ignorance and fear.

In the media that purported to cover it, two lines dominated. One, that the BRICS is driven by Chinese and Russian imperial interests, to rope poorer developing countries into an “anti-American” dynamic, designed to replace the dollar and destroy “capitalism,” for the benefit of their autocratic regimes! The second theme was that it probably wouldn’t work, since the different intentions among the five BRICS nations were incompatible, and an effort to expand the number of members would fail.

The outcome of the summit proved both of these lines to be malicious fabrications, coming from global financial interests, centered in Wall Street and the City of London, which recognized that the real intent is to end the Unipolar Order, which demands submission to neo-liberal economic policies. The fear of these networks is palpable in how they covered the summit.

What follows are some typical examples: The *Washington Post* lead story on August 23 was headlined, “Putin and Xi face hurdles in bid to turn BRICS into anti-Western bloc.” While it does include statements from Putin and Xi on the battle against neocolonialism and giving all nations an “equal voice,” the authors sneer that the BRICS is feeble and hopeless. The article concludes with a quote from a University of Chicago “Russian scholar,” who says BRICS “remains a superficial structure” with little to unite it. (The University of Chicago, which employs this professor, is a bastion of radical free-market, neo-liberal economic academics,

which ran the fascist coup in Chile in 1973 that imposed Gen. Augusto Pinochet as dictator.)

*The New York Times’* pre-summit coverage described China’s objective as “to shore up its own influence,” while an “isolated Russia needs new allies.” The authors conclude that the “nations in the group have very different interests, making common ground difficult to find.” One will search in vain in these “newspapers of record” for an explanation of how the agreement on expansion of membership occurred, given the allegedly diverse interests.

CNN featured a former Goldman Sachs economist, Jim O’Neill, whose claim to fame is that he is credited with coining the acronym BRIC in 2001, when he said that four countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China) would dominate the global economy by 2050. Now Baron O’Neill of Gatney, and a former British government minister, he has backtracked on this, and was dismissive toward the results of the summit. He belittled the expansion announced in Johannesburg as “hugely powerful symbolism,” but added, “I’m not quite sure what having a lot more countries is going to achieve.”

Most extreme were British publications, led by the *Economist*, with a headline asserting, “The BRICS Bloc is riven with tension; China’s plan to expand the club reveals the contradiction at its core.” The *Guardian* echoed Baron O’Neill’s line, saying it is “unclear” how expansion will increase its clout. It is now “even more disparate, a mix of powerful autocracies with middle-income and developing democracies,” concluding that the increase in members is “more symbolic than anything.”

Readers can see in our coverage of the summit that the BRICS emerged stronger and more united, confirming the commitment to mutually beneficial development; to coordinate financing for major projects; to end the underdevelopment imposed by institutions, such as the IMF, run by western financial cartels; and that rather than excluding any nation, they offer inclusion. The unwillingness to report on the actual deliberation of the summit, and the excitement which greeted it from nations of the Global South, demonstrates the intent to sabotage the process, to sustain the collapsing, predatory “Rules-Based Order,” which the BRICS nations intend to replace, and to maintain the blissful ignorance of this tectonic shift which unfortunately characterizes the majority in the Global North.