

The Role of the United States in the Formation of BRICS: Exploring Responsibility and Influence

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Abstract

This article critically examines the formation of the BRICS alliance, comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, with a specific focus on the pivotal role played by the United States in shaping this strategic partnership. It explores the extent of US influence and the accompanying responsibilities it assumes within the alliance. The article highlights the proactive efforts of Brazil, Russia, and China to expand their global influence while concurrently aiming to reduce US interference. Brazil, in particular, seeks partnerships with Russia and China as a means to attain autonomy and foster development. Simultaneously, Russia and China strive to challenge US global dominance and solidify their own spheres of influence. The article concludes by emphasizing the importance of critically evaluating Europe's military support to Ukraine, suggesting that such support may primarily serve US interests. Additionally, it underscores Europe's potential to promote peace and stability by pursuing independent and principled foreign policies.

Keywords: Brazil; United States; BRICS; Europe; Economic Dominance

Introduction

The relationship between Europe, Brazil, and the United States is a complex one, with both regions being influenced by the economic and cultural dominance of the United States. The question of whether Europe and Brazil are examples of subservience to the United States is a matter of debate, and one that has been discussed extensively in the literature (Santos, 2020). On the one hand, both Europe and Brazil have a long history of independent thought and action, while on the other hand, they have been deeply influenced by the United States, both economically and culturally. This article seeks to explore this question in more detail by examining relevant points in relations between Brazil and Europe and the United States, and highlighting the role of the United States in shaping Brazil's position on the world stage, particularly in relation to its membership in the BRICS alliance.

The formation of cultural identity is an aspect of understanding the relationship between Europe, Brazil, and the United States. Europe has a rich cultural heritage that dates back centuries, and this has played a significant role in shaping its identity (Giddens, 2019). Cultural diversity is a prominent aspect of Brazil, a nation that embraces a wealth of ethnic and cultural origins. However, it is necessary to acknowledge that a significant portion of the Brazilian population, particularly in the South and Southeast regions, faces challenges in constructing a cohesive national identity. This scenario can be largely attributed, in great part, to the relatively recent European immigration, which brought with it a strong presence of descendants of immigrants maintaining ties to their respective ethnic heritages. As a result, many people in these regions strongly identify with their European roots, such as Italians, Germans, Poles, and other nationalities, creating barriers to the development of a unified Brazilian national identity.

European immigration to Brazil predominantly occurred in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Groups of immigrants seeking better opportunities and a new life settled in the country. These

immigrants maintained strong cultural ties to their homelands, transmitting these identities to subsequent generations.

Over the decades, communities formed by European immigrants endeavoured to preserve their traditions, languages, and customs. Social clubs, ethnic schools, and traditional festivities emerged, all aimed at keeping alive the cultural heritage of these groups. This dedication strengthened the European identity within these communities and, consequently, influenced the perception of belonging to the Brazilian nation.

In some regions of the South and Southeast, social segregation occurred, with the formation of neighbourhoods and areas exclusively inhabited by certain ethnic groups. This segregation reinforced ethnic identities, hindering interaction and the sense of belonging among different groups.

The era of globalization and the ease of communication have provided greater access to information about origins and opportunities for connection with ancestral cultures. This allows people to maintain strong ties to their countries of ancestry, including through social media, which reinforces ethnic identification at the expense of national identity.

Given this context of fragmented identity, it is important to highlight that cultural diversity is a fundamental pillar of Brazil, an enriching source for national identity. The existence of multiple ethnic and cultural origins is a unique characteristic that contributes to the country's cultural richness.

To foster a sense of national unity, it is necessary to promote intercultural dialogue and mutual respect, valuing and celebrating both individual ethnic identities and the Brazilian national identity. Building a sense of belonging to the nation requires collective efforts, such as promoting inclusive education, encouraging cultural exchange, and fostering civic participation. These actions aim to bridge the gaps between different ethnic groups, enhance understanding, and create a shared sense of pride and belonging to Brazil as a whole. By embracing and appreciating cultural diversity while promoting a unified national identity, Brazil can create a stronger and more cohesive society that celebrates its rich heritage and collective identity.

Over the decades, especially after World War II and, more significantly, since the 1960s, the cultural influence of the United States has intensified in Brazil. Music, Hollywood cinema, and television productions have played a fundamental role in disseminating this influence. American trends and fads have found a prominent place in Brazilian society, shaping lifestyles, behaviours, and values.

However, this process of cultural influence is not uniform. There is a clear division among different social groups and their political views. While the population and left-leaning politicians strive to maintain the Brazilian state as a protector of the people, following models adopted by countries like Germany or France through institutions such as the Unified Health System (SUS) and protection of workers' rights, the elite and right-leaning politicians look to American liberalism as an inspiration, advocating for labour rights flexibility and a reduced role for the SUS. The role of the state in shaping the society is another significant difference. In Brazil, the government plays a major role in shaping the country's development and promoting social welfare (Furtado, 1959). In contrast, the state has a more limited role in the United States, with a greater emphasis on individualism and self-reliance (Hacker & Pierson, 2010).

This dichotomy reflects different perspectives on the role of the state in society. While some defend a strong and present state capable of guaranteeing rights and social protection, others see economic liberalism as the solution for economic growth and individual freedom.

This political dispute manifests itself in heated debates about public policies, labour reforms, social security, and public healthcare. The polarization between the left and the right has intensified, with both sides defending their ideals and political projects.

It is important to note that this cultural influence and political divergence are not exclusive to Brazil. In many countries around the world, there is a clash of ideologies and government models. Each side presents arguments based on their own convictions and interests.

However, it is crucial to seek a balance between external cultural influences and the preservation of national identity and fundamental values of Brazilian society. Dialogue and the search for solutions that reconcile different perspectives are essential for building a fairer, more balanced country with an efficient state that guarantees the rights and well-being of its population. There are also significant differences between Brazil and Europe and the United States in terms of their political systems, social structures, and cultural values (Câmara, de Castro e Oliveira, 2022). The United States has played a significant role in shaping Brazil's position on the world stage, particularly in relation to its membership in the BRICS alliance. Brazil's membership in the BRICS alliance is seen as a way for the country to assert itself as a major player on the world stage and to challenge the dominance of the United States and other Western powers (Martins, 2018).

Despite the inherent complexities and internal dynamics of Brazilian politics, it is worth acknowledging that external factors, including the involvement of the United States, have been shown to have played a role in certain episodes of instability in Brazil. Historical records have revealed instances of American interference, covert operations, and support for coup attempts in the country. The declassified documents shed light on the U.S. government's interests in shaping the political landscape of Latin America during the Cold War era, often prioritizing its own geopolitical agenda over the principles of democratic governance. While it is essential to recognize and address internal challenges, understanding the broader historical context helps to contextualize the influences and external forces that have shaped Brazil's political trajectory. This article will explore the impact of these events and attitudes on Brazil's position in the global arena.

Understanding the similarities and differences between the cultural identities of Brazil, Europe, and the United States is crucial for understanding the role of culture in shaping societies and promoting cross-cultural understanding. In this article, we cover a series of sessions dedicated to the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) and their respective regions. The first session will focus on the BRICS group as a whole, exploring its origins, objectives, and joint accomplishments. Next, we will have a session dedicated to Brazil and its neighbours, examining the political, economic, and social relations between Brazil and the countries of Latin America. Following that, we will have separate sessions dedicated to Russia and China, where we will discuss their regional influences and foreign policies. India, South Africa, and the 19 new candidates for BRICS will be addressed in a joint session, exploring their perspectives and contributions to the group. Finally, we will conclude the article by summarizing the key discussions and highlighting the main points covered in each session.

BRICS

The BRICS is a group composed of five emerging economies: Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. The creation of the BRICS began in 2006 when the leaders of these countries first met at the World Economic Forum. The initial objective was to establish dialogue and cooperation among the emerging economies to promote sustainable development, financial stability, and geopolitical influence. The term "BRICS" was coined by economist Jim O'Neill from Goldman Sachs (CNBC, 2022, September 12) as a way to highlight the potential of these countries on the global stage. Since then, the BRICS have strengthened their ties and collaborated in various areas such as trade, investment,

technological innovation, and global governance. The group aims to expand its influence and defend the common interests of these nations in international issues, playing an increasingly important role in the global arena. The formation of BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) as an influential bloc in the global arena has attracted significant attention and analysis. While much has been discussed about the individual contributions of each member country to the establishment of BRICS, it is equally important to examine the role of external actors, particularly the United States, in shaping the dynamics and trajectory of this emerging alliance.

This paper delves into the responsibility and influence of the United States in the formation of BRICS, exploring the multifaceted interactions and implications that have unfolded over the years. By scrutinizing the historical context, geopolitical considerations, and economic dimensions, we aim to shed light on the complex interplay between the United States and BRICS, providing insights into the extent of American involvement and its impact on the group's development.

Trade among BRICS nations without the use of the US dollar has gained momentum in recent years as a means of reducing dependence on the American currency and seeking greater global economic autonomy (Foreign Policy, 2023, April 24). The bloc's countries have already made agreements to facilitate trade transactions and loans in their own currencies, without the intermediary use of the US dollar. For example, Brazil and China announced in 2023 the creation of a clearing house that allows for transactions in yuan and real. Russia has also advocated for the use of national currencies in BRICS' commercial relations.

This initiative has alarmed the US government, which sees the dollar as an instrument of power and influence in the international scene. The dollar is the most used currency in international reserves, world trade, and financial markets. Furthermore, the dollar serves as the benchmark for pricing commodities such as oil and gold. The hegemony of the dollar allows the United States to impose economic sanctions on other countries, control the flow of capital, and benefit from the so-called exorbitant privilege, which is the ability to issue debt in its own currency without the risk of devaluation.

Therefore, the increase in trade among BRICS countries without the use of the dollar poses a challenge to the international monetary order dominated by the United States. The bloc's countries seek greater diversification of their economic relations and greater participation in global decisions. However, there are still obstacles to the consolidation of this idea, such as political and economic differences among BRICS members, instability of their currencies, and resistance from other countries and international institutions.

These examples demonstrate how European countries have sometimes suffered negative consequences by supporting the United States without careful consideration. The United States has made mistakes in its foreign policy history, and its interventions have sometimes had adverse effects on Europe. European countries need to consider their own interests and exercise caution when providing support to the United States. Blindly following the United States may lead to unintended consequences, and European countries should prioritize their own well-being.

BRICS nations, with \$50 billion in seed money, launched the New Development Bank as an alternative to the World Bank and IMF, and with the bank open to new members, interest in the BRICS group is "huge", with countries such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Algeria, and Argentina, as well as Mexico, Nigeria and others expressing interest in joining. (Bloomberg, 2023). The election of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva as president of Brazil has led to a shift in the country's foreign policy, with a greater focus on cooperation with the BRICS countries and a more critical stance towards the United States.

Currently, there is an ongoing debate about cooperation in the space sector among the BRICS countries. This cooperation involves the possibility of combining Russian rockets, the Brazilian Alcântara base, Sino-Brazilian satellites, and Indo-Brazilian supercomputers. This initiative aims to promote collaboration among the BRICS countries in the field of space exploration, sharing resources and knowledge to drive joint scientific and technological advancements. The resulting synergy from these partnerships has the potential to strengthen the BRICS countries' position in the global space arena and create new opportunities for cooperation and development in the sector.

The BRICS group of nations - Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa - have made significant strides towards establishing themselves as major players in the global geopolitical and economic landscape. With a combined population of over 3 billion people and a combined GDP of \$18.8 trillion, the BRICS countries have the potential to exert significant influence on international affairs (World Bank, 2021).

The BRICS countries and potential new members are actively seeking avenues for conducting trade and commerce that are less reliant on the interference of the United States. They aim to establish alternative channels and mechanisms that promote greater autonomy and independence in their economic relationships. These nations do not necessarily subscribe to the notion that the United States holds a global watchdog role or that it has the authority to dictate international trade policies. Instead, they prioritize the diversification of their partnerships and the strengthening of South-South cooperation, recognizing the importance of a multipolar world order that respects the sovereignty and interests of all nations involved.

Brazil and neighbours

The Monroe Doctrine, articulated by President James Monroe in 1823, stated that the Americas should be free from further European colonization and that any attempt to establish new colonies or extend political influence would be seen as a threat to the United States. While originally focused on preventing European powers from interfering in the affairs of newly independent countries in the Americas, the doctrine had a significant impact on Brazil as well. The United States' adherence to the Monroe Doctrine reinforced its interest in asserting influence and maintaining dominance in the region, often at the expense of other nations' sovereignty. This doctrine influenced the United States' involvement in Latin American affairs, including political interventions, economic interests, and the promotion of democracy in line with its own interpretation.

In Brazil, the Monroe Doctrine indirectly contributed to the perception of American interference in the country's internal affairs, particularly during moments of political instability and periods when U.S. interests aligned with specific factions or regimes. While the doctrine has evolved over time, its historical influence on Brazil underscores the complexities of foreign relations and the long-standing impact of U.S. policies in the region (Sexton, 2012).

However, the United States has not always been supportive of Brazil's efforts to assert its position on the world stage. In the past, the United States has supported dictatorships and coups *d'état* in various countries in the Americas, including Brazil (Agência Brasil, 2014) (Brown University Library, n.d.). More recently, the United States has been accused of spying on the Brazilian government, including on the former President Dilma Rousseff (BBC News, 2013).

Despite their unique cultural identities, both Brazil and Europe share some similarities with the United States, particularly in terms of their economic systems and democratic values. Or is it? The history of coups, uprisings, and impeachments in Brazil raises questions about the stability of democracy in the country.

1. **Coup of the Republic (1889):** The Coup of the Republic marked the end of monarchy in Brazil and the establishment of a republican regime. Military officials and dissatisfied politicians led the overthrow of Emperor Dom Pedro II, resulting in the establishment of a provisional government and later the adoption of a republican constitution.
2. **1930 Coup:** This coup was led by Getúlio Vargas and marked his rise to power in Brazil. Military and political supporters of Vargas, dissatisfied with the results of the presidential elections, took control of the government, ousting the elected President Washington Luís.
3. **1932 Constitutional Revolution (minor coup):** The 1932 Constitutional Revolution was an armed uprising led by civilian and military groups in São Paulo against the provisional government of Getúlio Vargas. The people of São Paulo fought for the promulgation of a new constitution and the removal of Vargas from power but were defeated after three months of conflict.
4. **1937 Coup (Estado Novo):** Getúlio Vargas once again orchestrated a coup, this time establishing the Estado Novo (New State). He dissolved the National Congress, enacted a new Constitution, and consolidated power in his hands. The Estado Novo was a period of authoritarian rule that lasted until 1945.
5. **1945 Coup (minor coup):** This coup took place at the end of World War II when political and military groups dissatisfied with Getúlio Vargas' government plotted his downfall. Pressured by popular protests and internal pressures, Vargas resigned, leading to the end of the Estado Novo.
6. **1954 Coup (minor coup):** Following a period of democratic rule, the suicide of Getúlio Vargas in 1954 sparked a political crisis in Brazil. The popular outcry triggered by his death led to protests and political pressures, resulting in the resignation of President Café Filho and the ascension of Carlos Luz, an event known as the 1954 Coup.
7. **1961 Coup (Legalistic Chain) (minor coup):** Faced with President Jânio Quadros' resignation in 1961, military factions threatened to prevent Vice President João Goulart from assuming office, triggering a political crisis. Through popular mobilization led by Governor Leonel Brizola, the "Legalistic Chain," Goulart managed to assume the presidency and avert a coup.
8. **1964 Coup (military dictatorship):** One of the most significant coups in Brazilian history, Brazilian military forces, with the support of civilian and international sectors, deposed President João Goulart in 1964, citing a supposed communist threat. This coup marked the beginning of a military regime that governed Brazil for over two decades, suppressing civil liberties and imposing authoritarian rule.
9. **1969 Coup (minor coup):** In 1969, a group of hardline military officers led by General Emílio Garrastazu Médici overthrew President Artur da Costa e Silva, who was suffering from health issues. This coup resulted in a more repressive phase of the military dictatorship, characterized by increased censorship and human rights violations.
10. **1992 Impeachment (Collor Affair):** In 1992, President Fernando Collor de Mello faced impeachment proceedings due to corruption allegations. Massive public protests and mounting evidence led to his resignation before the Senate could remove him from office, making it the first successful impeachment process in Brazil's history.
11. **2016 Impeachment (Dilma Rousseff):** President Dilma Rousseff faced impeachment proceedings in a highly controversial and polarizing political climate. Accused of fiscal mismanagement, she was impeached by the Brazilian Congress, resulting in her removal from office. This impeachment

process highlighted deep divisions within Brazilian society and raised concerns about the strength and legitimacy of democratic institutions in the country.

12. 2018 Lava Jato Controversy: The Lava Jato (Car Wash) operation, once hailed as a significant anti-corruption effort, faced serious allegations of impropriety and potential bias. The involvement of former Judge Sérgio Moro, who presided over key Lava Jato cases, raised concerns about his impartiality, culminating in a declaration of suspicion against him. Additionally, the participation of prosecutor Deltan Dallagnol, a central figure in the case, who later became a federal deputy, faced repercussions as he was eventually removed from his position. These developments cast doubt on the integrity and fairness of the Lava Jato operation, with implications for its impact on the electoral process. The controversies surrounding Lava Jato raised questions about the extent to which these actions influenced the political landscape, further fuelling debates about the democratic processes in Brazil.
13. 2023, On January 8th of this year, Brazil witnessed the invasion and vandalism of the headquarters of the Three Powers in the federal capital. In an attempted coup, disgruntled Bolsonaro supporters, dissatisfied with the outcome of the presidential election, marched from the Army Headquarters in Brasília to the Esplanade of Ministries, where they destroyed buildings housing the National Congress, the Supreme Federal Court (STF), and the Presidential Palace. This shocking event underscored the deep political divisions in the country and raised concerns about the stability of Brazil's democratic institutions. The incident served as a stark reminder of the challenges faced in maintaining a thriving democracy and upholding the rule of law.

Have Brazil demonstrated subservience to the United States in the last 70 years?

After four years under a government that paid homage to the flag of the United States, it is gratifying to see Brazil, under the leadership of Lula, striving to regain its autonomy and the ability to be the master of its own destiny. With a vision focused on national sovereignty and the pursuit of a more equitable social and economic development, Lula's return brings hope for a future where the country can chart its own policies and make decisions that benefit its people and sustainable growth.

The United States has been accused of interventionism in several countries, including Brazil and Germany. In Brazil, the US government supported a military coup in 1964 that led to a 21-year dictatorship (Agência Brasil, 2014) (Brown University Library, n.d.) (Talbot, D., 2015). The US has also been accused of spying on the Brazilian government, including former President Dilma Rousseff (BBC News 2013).

In Germany, the US has been accused of spying on Chancellor Angela Merkel's phone conversations, which strained US-German relations (BBC News 2013). The US has also been accused of conducting espionage on German citizens and businesses "“The representative of the US intelligence services at the embassy of the United States of America has been told to leave Germany,” government spokesman Steffen Seibert said” (BBC News., 2014, July 10).

The US has a history of supporting dictators in Latin America. In Chile, the US supported the military coup that overthrew President Salvador Allende in 1973 and installed General Augusto Pinochet (Kornbluh 2003). In Argentina, the US supported the military dictatorship that ruled from 1976 to 1983, during which time tens of thousands of people were killed or disappeared (Andersen, M. E., 2018).

There are arguments suggesting that Brazil has lost strategic importance to the United States since the 1970s when the Americans adopted a protectionist stance towards Brazilian exports. This change

in the United States' posture may have contributed to a decrease in trade relations and strategic partnerships between the two countries. By adopting protectionist measures such as imposing tariffs and trade restrictions, the United States may have diminished its interest in strengthening economic and political ties with Brazil. (Cucolo, E., & Cagliari, A., 2020, November).

China

China has also been a key driver of the BRICS agenda, with its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) being a major component of the group's economic strategy. The BRI is a massive infrastructure and development project that aims to connect China to Europe and other parts of Asia through a network of roads, railways, ports, and other infrastructure projects. The BRI has been welcomed by many developing countries as a way to improve their infrastructure and promote economic growth (Breslin, S., 2018).

The policy of disengagement implemented by the Trump administration had significant implications for Sino-American relations. However, its effectiveness in achieving its objectives has been questionable. Despite imposing high tariffs on Chinese products, China's exports to the United States rebounded, indicating limited success in reducing trade imbalances. Moreover, the attempt to contain China's high-tech development not only affected Chinese companies but also caused collateral damage to U.S. and global industries. As the Biden administration takes office, it is expected that the policy of disengagement will continue, albeit with a more selective approach, focusing on critical sectors while allowing for greater exchanges in non-critical areas (China Daily, 2021).

However, the BRICS countries face significant challenges in achieving their goals. One of the biggest challenges is the wide range of economic and political systems represented in the group. While China has a state-controlled economy and Russia has a strong central government, Brazil, India, and South Africa all have more market-based economies and more democratic political systems (The World Bank, 2017).

Another challenge is the varying levels of development and economic power among the member nations. China is by far the largest and most powerful of the five nations, with a GDP of \$15.4 trillion in 2020, compared to India's \$2.8 trillion, Brazil's \$1.4 trillion, Russia's \$1.3 trillion, and South Africa's \$283 billion (World Bank, 2021).

Despite these challenges, the BRICS countries have made significant progress in establishing themselves as major players in global affairs. The group has established several institutions, including the New Development Bank and the Contingent Reserve Arrangement, to promote economic cooperation and provide an alternative to the existing global financial system dominated by Western countries (Reuters, 2021).

Moreover, the group has continued to hold regular summits and meetings, demonstrating a commitment to working together to promote their shared interests and goals. As the global balance of power continues to shift away from Western dominance, the BRICS countries are likely to play an increasingly important role in shaping the future of international affairs.

The China-U.S. trade war, initiated by then-President Donald Trump almost five years ago, aimed to pressure China to address unfair trade practices and decouple the U.S. from China's economy. However, the impact of elevated tariffs on U.S. consumers and manufacturing output, without achieving desired leverage over China, has become evident. While there have been some subtle changes in commercial patterns, the long-term effects and the extent of separating the two largest economies remain unclear. The trade war has led to a decline in U.S. imports from China, particularly

in heavily tariffed intermediate and capital goods, while consumer products have been relatively unaffected. The tensions have disproportionately affected industries integrated with the Chinese market, but overall trade continues to rise, suggesting varying effects across sectors. Moreover, despite speculation, surveys indicate mixed sentiments among multinational corporations regarding relocation from China, with many still considering it a top business destination despite supply chain disruptions caused by the trade war and the pandemic (Zeng, K., 2023, February 17).

Russia

One of the key goals of the BRICS countries is to establish a more multipolar world order that is less dominated by Western powers. This goal was clearly stated in the group's first official summit in 2009, where the leaders of the five nations issued a joint statement calling for a "more just and democratic international order" (BRICS, 2009).

Russia has been an important advocate for this goal, with President Vladimir Putin stating that the current world order is "unfair and unipolar" and that the BRICS countries should work together to create a "fairer and more democratic system of international relations" (DW News, 2021).

Since the end of the Cold War, NATO has expanded eastward, bringing new members into the alliance. This expansion has been opposed by Russia, which sees it as a threat to its security. NATO expansion has been a major source of tension between the United States and Russia, culminating in the invasion of Ukraine by Russia in February 2022. The invasion of Ukraine, particularly the annexation of Crimea, has drawn international condemnation and sparked a geopolitical crisis. The parallel between the invasion of Iraq by the United States in 2003 and Russia's actions in Ukraine raises questions about geopolitical double standards and hypocrisy. While the United States criticizes Russia's actions, it is essential to consider the role played by major powers in shaping global conflicts. The United States has been involved in a number of trade disputes with European countries in recent years.

It is important to acknowledge that the United States has a documented history of interfering in the elections of other countries, including nations in Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East. However, there is no concrete evidence to suggest that the US played a direct role in the election of Zelensky in Ukraine. Despite this, it is reasonable to assume that Russia may be sceptical of US involvement in Ukrainian affairs, particularly given the US's history of interference in other nations' internal affairs. It's worth noting that there is a longstanding lack of trust and mutual suspicion between Russia and the United States, particularly concerning foreign policy and security matters, which has been a significant challenge in the relationship between the two nations, especially with regards to Ukraine. In 1991, a referendum in Crimea resulted in overwhelming support for the region's autonomy, but in 1995, Ukraine forcibly abolished Crimea's constitution and annexed the region (Dunford, 2023).

In 2003, the United States invaded Iraq, without the support of the United Nations Security Council (United Nations, 2003). The war was highly controversial, and many European countries opposed it. However, some European countries, such as the United Kingdom, supported the United States. The Iraq War was a major foreign policy blunder for the United States. It destabilized the Middle East, led to the rise of ISIS, and cost the lives of thousands of American and Iraqi soldiers (Chomsky, N. 2013). The war also damaged the reputation of the United States in Europe. The Iraq War also had a negative impact on the European economy. The war led to an increase in oil prices, which hurt European businesses and consumers (The Guardian, 2003, February 28). The Iraq War has been widely regarded as a geopolitical strategy rather than solely based on the presence of weapons of mass destruction. Many believe that the invasion was driven by geopolitical interests, such as gaining control over Iraq's oil resources and establishing a dominant military presence in the region. It is important to highlight that the previous comments regarding China, Russia, India, and

South Africa aim to shed light on the fact that the Western world, particularly the media, often exhibits deliberate blindness towards such geopolitical events. This perspective becomes evident when excessive criticism is directed towards Russia for its actions in Ukraine, while similar actions or motivations by other powerful nations are downplayed or overlooked. It underscores the need for a balanced and comprehensive approach in assessing geopolitical events and their underlying motivations, avoiding selective scrutiny based on geopolitical interests.

According to a publication by the Pew Research Center in 2003 (Pew Research Center, 2003), the United States, North Korea, Iran, and Iraq were among the top five countries perceived as posing a threat to global peace in the eyes of Europeans. This assessment reflected the concerns and perceptions prevalent at that time.

India, South Africa and 19 others that want to join BRICS

The entry of South Africa into the BRICS group (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) was motivated by a series of strategic and economic factors. Here are some of the main motivations for South Africa to join BRICS: Economic growth: South Africa sought greater integration with rapidly growing emerging economies like Brazil, Russia, India, and China. By joining BRICS, South Africa hoped to leverage trade, investment, and economic cooperation opportunities with these countries to boost its own economic growth.

Diversification of trading partners: South Africa historically relied heavily on trade ties with developed countries such as the United States and the European Union. By joining BRICS, the country aimed to diversify its trading relationships and reduce its economic dependence on those regions. Collaboration with BRICS provided South Africa with a new range of trade opportunities with emerging economies.

Political cooperation: BRICS membership also allowed South Africa to strengthen its geopolitical position and increase its global influence. By associating with other BRICS countries, South Africa gained a platform to promote its political interests and participate in international debates on global issues such as global governance, reform of international financial institutions, and climate change.

Access to resources and knowledge: BRICS participation enabled South Africa to access financial resources, technology, and specialized knowledge from other group members. This could help the country address internal challenges such as infrastructure, social development, and technical capacity.

South-South cooperation: By joining BRICS, South Africa also aligned itself with a South-South cooperation approach that seeks to strengthen ties among developing countries and promote greater equity in the global order. This reflected South Africa's vision that collaboration with other emerging countries could drive development and global inclusion. Among the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), India has historically maintained a relatively friendly relationship with the United States. Despite differences and challenges in bilateral relations, such as trade and geopolitical issues, the U.S. and India have sought to strengthen economic, strategic, and diplomatic ties over the years. This approach is reflected in dialogues and agreements in areas such as regional security, trade and investment, science and technology, among others. However, it is important to note that relations between countries can be complex and subject to changes based on political, economic, and strategic factors.

Conclusion

In the current global scenario, countries such as Brazil, Russia, and China have actively sought to expand their regional and global influence, driven by the goal of asserting their autonomy and reducing interference from the United States in their internal affairs. These nations perceive the influence of the US as a manifestation of protectionism, control over the global currency, and even illegal interventions in sovereign regimes.

Specifically, Brazil has been dedicated to strengthening its position as a regional leader in South America while simultaneously increasing its global influence. Rather than blindly adhering to US interests, the Brazilian government has pursued partnerships with other emerging nations like Russia and China, aiming to propel its economic and political development and achieve greater autonomy from the US.

Russia and China, on the other hand, share an interest in challenging US global hegemony. Russia aims to reaffirm its influence in the former Soviet republics and safeguard its security and geopolitical interests in the region. Meanwhile, China seeks to consolidate its status as a global power, extending its economic and political influence across different parts of the world without subjugating itself to US interests.

In conclusion, it is crucial to recognize that recent US actions have played a role in Brazil's closer alignment with the BRICS alliance. Brazil's response to US unilateralism and its prioritization of self-interests at the expense of other nations has prompted the diversification of international partnerships and a reduced reliance on the US. After its tenure as temporary president of the United Nations Security Council, Brazil sought peaceful solutions. Its resolution proposal for the Israel-Palestine conflict received significant support. However, once again, the United States demonstrates a lack of concern about having Brazil among its valued and respected allies. Clearly, Brazil is not on Washington's positive agenda. This shift allows Brazil to establish itself as a more independent and influential player on the global stage.

However, it is also important to critically assess Europe's support for Ukraine in its conflict with Russia. Blindly backing a country without a thorough understanding of the facts and consequences can have disastrous outcomes, as seen in the US-led Iraq War. Hence, Europe must exercise caution and deliberate on its stance and actions concerning the Ukraine conflict. To foster cross-cultural understanding and cooperation, it is essential to comprehend the similarities and differences between the cultural identities of Brazil, Europe, and the United States. Each region possesses unique strengths and faces distinct challenges, and collaboration among these regions can yield mutual benefits and contribute to a more peaceful and prosperous world. Europe should assume a central role in its foreign policy, pursuing peace and fostering closer relations with Russia and China to prevent conflicts and establish a more stable and harmonious global order. Europe, having experienced the devastating consequences of its own mistakes turned into a battleground twice, must strive to avoid a repetition due to the power struggle between the United States, Russia, and China.

By pursuing a more independent and cooperative foreign policy, Europe can play a pivotal role in promoting peace and stability on the global stage, contributing to the construction of a world order that values cooperation and dialogue over conflict and confrontation. Indeed, it is important to emphasize that the BRICS countries have their own merit in the creation and consolidation of the bloc. While European protectionism and other factors may have also contributed, the BRICS members have shown initiative and determination in seeking greater autonomy and global influence. Despite the diverse internal interests and specific conflicts among members, the ability to negotiate with a

currency not tied to the dollar is, and will continue to be, one of the greatest advantages of the bloc, and undoubtedly the biggest geopolitical loss for the United States in recent decades. In August, invitations were extended to Saudi Arabia, Iran, the United Arab Emirates, Argentina, Ethiopia, and Egypt to join in 2024. This move highlights the bloc's strategy to expand its influence and strengthen its position in the global economy, despite the inherent challenges of uniting such diverse nations under one economic and geopolitical umbrella.

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