



# Global South: The Leadership Conundrum In The 'Post-World-Ordered' World

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**Abstract:** The world order established after the Second World War transcended into a complex web of poly-crisis caused by the 'reconfigurations' in the post-Cold War disintegrated world order to the present 'post-World Ordered' world, subjected to multiple disarrayed orders. The decline of western hegemony, the disintegration of liberal world order, and the rise of the rest are co-terminous features of this emerging 'World Order'. This is reflected in the proportional decline of the existing geo-political world construed with the ascendancy of reconfigured 'power' narratives and proportional predominance of the 'Global South'. The term "Global South" denotes a change in emphasis on distinct cultural identities and newer strategic power dynamics. In the light of this restructuring, the present paper strives to analyse and deconstruct the concept of 'Global South' from the prism of geopolitical realism and decode the rivalries for its leadership by focusing specifically on the Indo-Sino hostilities maintained and exploited by the Western powers.

**Index Terms:** Global South, Third World, G20, Post-World Ordered world.

## Introduction

The continuity of a 'layered interplay of diverse and overarching metanarratives' reflecting the nerve of geopolitics usually manifests in the form of new concepts and discourses. At the onset of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the defining discourse of geopolitical realities of 'power coercion and power diffusion', that is gaining weight and centrality in the contemporary global order is the conception of the 'Global South', marked by the diffused multiplicity of catastrophes. Though suffering from the 'Peter-Pan' syndrome of not growing, the concept is yet to materialise as a viable force of new global order, decolonised from the influence of the standing global hegemons. The in-terminable process of unfolding the potential of the Global South has led to the simultaneous geopolitical contestation for its definition, description, recognition, and relevance, leading to the stalemate of its leadership.

The epistemological change of labels from the 'Third World' to 'Global South' in the discourses of international relations and global diplomacy reflects not only the complexity of contemporary geopolitical matrixes but also the shift and diffusion of gravitational centres of hegemony from 'established to diffused'. The term 'Third World', coined by demographer, anthropologist and historian of the French economy Alfered Sauvy (1952), was used geopolitically during the high days of the Cold War between the capitalist 'First World' led by the USA, and the 'Second World' led by USSR as the position for belligerent ideologies. The so-called Third World carried the baggage of colonialism, condescending racism, backwardness, and peripheral relevance in world politics of those countries that declined to be active assistants of block politics.<sup>1</sup> The construct to downgrade the non-block countries is to be analysed in the deeper ideological framework and system rivalries of the cold war period, so much so that the newly industrialised countries (NICs) later termed as 'emerging economies' like India, China, Mexico, Brazil got imposed with the new Eurocentric-orientalists nomenclature of 'developing counties', while others were grouped under the vague canopy of the 'Third World'.<sup>2</sup> The less or least developing countries (LDCs) like Ghana, Egypt, Bolivia, and others,

possessing natural resources and strategic values were grouped under another geopolitically constructed ambiguous label of 'Fourth World'.<sup>3</sup> The leftover least-less developed countries (LLDCs) were hypothesised as the 'Fifth World', demonstrating the typical political core of the global Eurocentric binary of 'the West and the Rest' in reference to global political cruxes.<sup>4</sup> The hierarchy of poverty clearly becomes the pivot of world politics, from the prosperous 'first world' at the top to the subsequent worlds of decreasing wealth, increasing numbers and pauperisation that got reflected in Rostow's sequences in *The Stage of Economic Growth* (1960).<sup>5</sup> The resultant bold assertion of the 'Third World' for greater economic and strategic manoeuvre in their domestic domain as well as in international politics by aggregating the diplomatic unity amidst fractured identity led to the demand for a New International Economic Order (NIEO) with the slogan of 'Trade not Aid'. The Dependency theorist linked the underdevelopment of the developing countries to the exploitation by the developed world. Thus came the demand for realigning the International Political Economy (IPE) through establishing the NIEO (1974) by the G-77. However, the same was rebutted by the first world comprising of OECD countries as the "shopping list of G-77."<sup>6</sup>

The expression 'Third World' that denotes the geostrategic realities of post-Second World War global order till the disintegration of the USSR (1991) is commonly used in the contest of "decolonisation and superpower rivalry" symbolising the regions of "Africa, East and Southeast Asia, Latin America, and Middle east."<sup>7</sup> However, the oriental construct of ascribing identities and ostensibly demarcating postcolonial nations was altered in 1977 when the Brandt Commission<sup>8</sup> envisioned that the 'South' is a site essential to the sustenance of a "greater good of the world, especially for the North"<sup>9</sup>. The ideational abstraction of the 'Global South' is not a misnomer or refinement of the conception of the 'third worldism' but the defining geo-political construct of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, snowballing to shape the coming future of global politics. This encompasses a spectre of concepts of neo-economic imperialism, democratic decolonisation, subaltern sovereignty, and myriad rhetoric of self-determination. The consequential 'North-South' conflict resulted in what Fareed Zakaria termed as the 'Rise of the Rest' in the form of BRICS,<sup>10</sup> trying to overcome the fragmented solidarity of the Third World as surfaced during the Doha Rounds at WTO. This fragmentation was premised on the disintegration of the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM) into multiple regional blocks like SAARC, APEC & ASEAN to name a few. The political economy of the Global South is an attempt to reframe, rechristen, and re-establish the relevance of the principles and objectives of former NAM in the complex global disorder of the post-1991 era. Many rising economies of the Global South, however, refuse to accept any leadership other than their own, making the contest for leadership indistinctly ambiguous. This ambiguity of characteristics and disintegrated interests of previously 'non-pole' countries is manifested in the continuous conundrum of their approaches, intents, policies, and unity of voice under unified leadership.

### Chinese Centrality to the Headship of Global South

Hubert H. Humphrey truly said, "foreign policy is really domestic policy with its hat on"<sup>11</sup> meaning that a nation's domestic circumstances influence, if not determine, its foreign policy. The assertion of Elizabeth Economy that "China will no longer have to fight for leadership, its centrality will be guaranteed"<sup>12</sup> can come precise if China's domination over the global south is maintained. President Xi Jinping is projecting China as a 'global agent of welcoming change' as against the 'status quoist US' engaged in new forever wars, by pressing its four grand initiatives: 1. Belt and Road Initiatives (BRI); 2. Global Development Initiatives (GDI); 3. Global Security Initiatives (GSI); and 4. Global Civilizational Initiatives (GCI).<sup>13</sup> China's diplomatic dealmakers are engaged in endeavours to connect the BRI to the Association of Southeast Asian (ASEAN) Master Plan on Connectivity, and align it with the UN's Agenda for Sustainable Development - 2030.<sup>14</sup> China has already been successful in linking GDI with the UN Agenda for Sustainable Development-2030 and is holding its meetings and seminars in the UN office designated for 'South-South' cooperation.<sup>15</sup> At the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) meeting in September 2022 at Samarkand (Uzbekistan)<sup>16</sup>, China was not only successful in inducting Iran and Turkey as new members to the China-centric global grouping, she was also able to steer clear its GSI for the 'indivisible security' construct that 'no country can strengthen its security at the expense of others' - a plan endorsed by all members except only for India and Tajikistan.<sup>17</sup> China has been vying for this position for a long time.<sup>18</sup>

After the fallout of COVID-19 China is also working on rejuvenating its ambitious plan of the Health Silk Road (HSR) to navigate the global health governance, targeting primarily the subordinate regions of Africa and Latin America. As a part of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), China's Health Silk Road offers a 'unique opportunity to address some fissures exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic', providing her with some distinctive prospects of entering the promising field of *global health equity*.<sup>19</sup> In line with the objectives of the 14th 5-year Plan for National Economic and Social Development,<sup>20</sup> China endorsed the development of the Health Silk Road as a priority. Till March 2022, about 146 countries from different parts of the globe joined the BRI by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). Among these, 43 countries are from Sub-Saharan Africa; 34 from Europe and Central Asia; 25 from East Asia and the Pacific; 20 countries are from Latin America and the Caribbean; 18 from the Middle East and North Africa; and 6 are from Southeast Asia.<sup>21</sup>

Chinese Assistance under its 'Heavy Purse Diplomacy' constitutes a major component of developmental aid to the deprived regions of the non-developed countries, making them dependent and satellites of Chinese avowal for leading the Global South. The technological advancement and assistance further add feathers to the leadership prospects of China. For instance, more than 70% of all infrastructure components of 4G telecommunication in Africa are provided by the Chinese giant Huawei. China beholds the world's largest and most advanced militaries furnished by the 'New-age Technologies' of Artificial Intelligence, advanced Machine learning, and supremacy in cyber warfare coupled with its civilizational soft power diplomacy. Dawn C. Murphy in his 2022 text, 'China's Rise in the Global South' intricately discusses Beijing's quest for configuring an 'Alternative World Order' by inducting the Middle East and Africa under its 'Umbrella of Influences' that includes architectural, financial, strategic and soft power influence. According to Murphy, China is skilfully structuring an "alternative international order"<sup>22</sup> that will underpin its economic, political, and military relations [specifically] with the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa as well as the 'rest of the developing world'<sup>23</sup>. However, an affluent China would not be a status-quoist power, but an aggressive and expansionist country resolutely determined to attain regional hegemony as "the best way for any state to maximise its prospects for survival is to be the hegemon in its region of the world".<sup>24</sup> The Chinese 'Middle Kingdom Complex'<sup>25</sup> coupled with the 'five finger policy'<sup>26</sup> and sovereignty claims over the international waters of the South China Sea foster its claim of 'Asian Century with the Chinese Centrality' and leadership of the non-western world. Chinese success in building and leading 'alternative global groups' like BRICS and Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) with structures of alternative international political economy in the form of the New Development Bank (NDB) and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) facilitates its leadership of 'Global South'.

### **'Global' Leadership of Global South in the 'Post-World Ordered' World**

In the summer of 2022, Grant claimed that the rule-based liberal international order or what the West called the 'world order' established after the end of the Second World War is in crisis, predicting the inevitable change in the current system of the international governance and global distribution of power.<sup>27</sup> The modern eras of International Relations as explained by the Big Bang theories of IR<sup>28</sup> trace their genesis from - the Euro-centric notion of Peace of Westphalia, establishing the myths of Pax-Britanica from 1648 to 1919, the realist reflexivity of the Twenty Years Crisis, the Cold War era of complex interdependence and outlying crises after WW-II, to the hegemony of Pax-Americana after the disintegration of the USSR and the pronouncements of the 'New World Order' - which further push the 'subaltern South' at the periphery of global power politics. The Global Economic Crisis (2008) was accompanied by the subsequent world-wide events of inevitability like - the Chinese assertion of Pax-Sinica<sup>29</sup> in the form of Cold War 2.0, the avowal of Russian assertiveness in Crimea-2014 and Ukraine- 2022, the economic and strategic advancement of India, the rise of Rest with the establishment of BRICS+, escalated violence in the Middle East, black nationalisms' in Africa, and the rise of hyper-nationalism in advanced democracies - that has dismantled the world order fashioned by the western powers. Along with this, the multiple non-state actors and mighty MNCs controlling the Digital World that engulfs the mankind has led to the creation of the 'post-World Ordered' world premised on the disintegration of the all-established orders of international relations. The advent of the phenomenon of the 'Global South' is the structural part of this fragile formation that constitutes the changing order of IR in motion. Rising global inequality, surprising stagnation of Asia's middle classes<sup>30</sup>, failing environmental negotiations, down-sliding of democracy particularly in democratic countries, sinking of Sudan and humanitarian disasters in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and the farewell to arms control in the third Nuclear age constricts defining the existing global world.

The narratives of 'South-South cooperation' like the IBSA alliance<sup>31</sup> postulates to confine the Global South in the geographical 'South', unfastened from the never-ending influence of regional hegemonies of the North. However, the complex interdependence of a globalised economy and interwoven security architecture of the 'insecurity dilemma' turned the Global South into a confluence zone of divergent interests of major actors, ranging from advanced states and MNCs to non-state actors. The US with the legacy of soft power, military and technological leadership, and hegemonic economic power of its Dollar not only commands the global neo-liberal institutions like the UN and its various agencies, the Bretton Wood institutions, global financial system, and supply chain management, but is a leading power in directing the construct of Global South. The Global South in the form of an idea and action is a US conception to inflate its hegemony, and restrain Russia and China. The fundamental stewardship of the US and Britain in determining and restructuring the Third World and later the Global South, using geo-economic policies of economic imperialism is termed by Atul Kohli as *Global Periphery*. He elucidates that monetary globalisation and mounting debt crisis coupled with the 'Balance of Payment' crises of 1980/1990s led to the imposition of Washington Consensus and Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) on development, first in "Latin America and Africa, and then following the Asian financial crisis in 1997, in parts of Asia".<sup>32</sup> The 'US-Africa Enduring Partnership', the 'American Partnership for Economic Prosperity' which cover around 90% GDP of the western Hemispheres, the US pivot to Asia and now the Indo-Pacific, the Partnership for Global Infrastructure Investment, the C5+1 with Central Asia, the Abraham Accord in Middle East, the QUAD, the I2U2, the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, the leadership of G-20, and the architecture of India-Middle East Europe Economic Corridor makes US the leader of the Global South amidst other contenders.

The assertiveness of Russia to regain its grandeur by monopolising the Sahel region of Africa, constant support to Bashar Al-Assad regime in Syria, and challenging the US-constructed global order in Europe by annexing Crimea in 2014 and invading Ukraine in 2021, constant support to Iran against Israel, maintains its prominence as a global player in the geo-political chessboard of redrawing the world order. Russia-China joint declaration of 'no limits' partnership calling for 'international relations of a new type', that are no longer dominated by the US. Nevertheless, it does provide a leverage to China, since Russia is fighting both Ukraine (forces of NATO) and Western sanctions.

Sponsoring the theory of 'Offensive Realism', Mearsheimer in his work *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, firmly promulgates that while the "overriding goal of each state is to maximize its share of world power at the expense of other states...their ultimate aim is to be the hegemon- the only great power in the system."<sup>33</sup> He also pronounces that the USA and China would be having natural antagonism as 'China's power grows'<sup>34</sup>. The leadership question of the global south has many competitors, however, it is primarily a zero-sum game between USA and China. The leadership contention of the global south has shifted from the binaries of US-USSR during the Cold War, to the complex entanglements between the US and China in the contemporary world of 'multiple new wars', where India although the 'Ideal Leader' is making its presence notably assertive.

### **India's Steward Leadership of Global South**

India is positioned to serve as a global guru for several reasons that includes its recent accomplishments like expanding global influence and a historical legacy, and having the potential to significantly contribute to sustainable development objectives. In 2023, Bharat successfully hosted the 18<sup>th</sup> G-20 summit in New Delhi, with the theme of its civilizational ethos '*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*', translated as "One Earth, One Family, One Future"<sup>35</sup>, that firmly established India as the 'Global Friend'. India's assertion that "this is not a time for war"<sup>36</sup> presented an image of a neutral force, urging all for peace and fostering negotiations. Seen as a ray of hope and a model of peace in a hypersensitive, multipolar international order where aggression has become the norm,<sup>37</sup> India has demonstrated civility as a feasible option in conducting business in a world that is divided by difficult dichotomies like Iran-Saudi Arabia, Israel-Palestine, and North Korea-South Korea.<sup>38</sup> There is a significant difference between framing a foreign policy and achieving the desired aims and objectives. In a complex post-world-ordered global politics, "India's policymakers have responded with some dexterity" and "their responses, at economic, political and strategic levels have enabled India to emerge as a potential great power" although the pressure of developmental challenges is quiet telling.<sup>39</sup> However, she efficaciously facilitated the induction of the 'African Union' as the new full member, reinforcing the 'game changer potential' of the group by strengthening the 'voice of the Global South' and, secondly by tabling more inclusive agendas that indicated that 'increased participation' is the way forward for a future of 'global action and partnership'.<sup>40</sup> It is rightly observed by Harsh V. Pant:

At a time when geopolitical tensions among major powers are running high and much of the rest of the world is despondent about the state of multilateral institutions, India not only managed to make the G20 a much more dynamic platform, but also perhaps revived faith in the ability of multilateral processes and structures to deliver by moving the global governance agenda beyond hyperpolarized discourse.<sup>41</sup>

No prominent grouping of non-block countries or Global South can be recognised without the presence of India. The intended absence of India from the Chinese four grand initiatives deprives them of global moral legitimacy and geopolitical leadership authority. The open secret of Chinese debt trap subjugation and expansionism in its neighbourhood not only dispossesses its leadership claims, but helps establish India as a reliable moral partner of the Global South.

Nehru to build a 'non-block block' or 'an alignment of the nonaligned'<sup>42</sup> asked the famous postcolonial question at the Afro-Asian Bandung Conference, Indonesia (1955), "Are we, the countries of Asia and Africa, devoid of any positive position except being pro-Communists or anti-communists?"<sup>43</sup> This question still drives India's strategic ambition to have a 'respectable place' in the comity of nations. India is moving fast to become the third-largest economy by the end of this decade. She is heavily investing in modernising its security architectures and becoming a global manufacturing hub and defence exporter. She has effectively established itself as the 'net security provider' and the first respondent in the vast Indian Ocean Region. Many nations of the Global South are direct beneficiaries of India's 'Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme'. Under its 'Development Partnership' India has provided millions of Dollars as Grants & Loans and Lines of Credit to various developing countries. Also known as the "pharmacy of the world"<sup>44</sup> India is essential to the production of reasonably priced medications and vaccinations. She became a major global supplier of vaccines during the epidemic when the majority of Western countries engaged themselves in vaccine nationalism. In 2018, India launched its 'India for Humanity' initiative, which was accelerated during the 'COVID-19 vaccine Maitri' to save the world from the pandemic. She has proved herself as a partner in mutual development and sustainable growth, as against Chinese ambitions of economic encroachment.

More than striving for 'Leadership' of the Global South, India is inclined to 'Steer' the peripheral world into the mainstream of global politics, giving 'Voice' to the 'Subaltern South'. After successfully hosting the 1<sup>st</sup> Voice of Global South Summit (VOGSS) in January 2023, and subsequently the 2<sup>nd</sup> VOGSS in November 2023 in a virtual format which was attended by more than 100 countries of the Global South, India has hosted the 3<sup>rd</sup> VOGSS on August 17, 2024 on the theme of *An Empowered Global South for a Sustainable Future*.<sup>45</sup> In a host of ministerial and summit meetings "An Empowered Global South for a Sustainable Future" issues related to diplomacy, finance, energy, commerce, educational opportunities, health and environment were addressed.<sup>46</sup> India has set the 4 Rs—Respond, Recognise, Respect, and Reform - as its worldwide strategy.<sup>47</sup> During the 3<sup>rd</sup> Summit, India announced an initial contribution of \$ 25 million for the Social Impact Fund, \$ 2.5 million for the Special Fund for Capacity Building, and \$ 1 million for training in trading policy.<sup>48</sup> The 'Global South and Perspectives on Development Partnership 2023' Report informs about the support that India currently extends (more than \$ 7.5 billion annually) to the countries of the Global South for their development and empowerment.<sup>49</sup> The grand global initiatives of India like "Lifestyle for Environment" (LiFE) promote a decoupling of economic growth and consumption by highlighting resource re-use, recycling and sustainability. Essentially, Mission Life is a concept as well as a strategy that guides civilisations towards sustainable progress while honouring the planet's environmental limits. To advance the interest of the Global South, India has been taking the lead in climate talks.

For example, the Contribution towards Loss and Damage Fund,<sup>50</sup> International Solar Alliances (ISA), India's dedication to sustainable energy & ambitious goal of achieving 450 GW of renewable power by 2030, global health resourcefulness of One World One Health, the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), extension of financial inclusion through Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) with openness, inter-operability and scalability, and extension of quality education and skill enhancements through opening the overseas campuses of prestigious Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), are all directed towards equitable multitudinous development of the Global South. India stands not only as one of the important 'leads' of the Global South but 'empowers' it through cultural connect, gentle nudge of soft power, capacity building, as well as respecting and recognising the unique identity and equal status of every state. To further its digital transformation and broaden its global influence, India is also aggressively transferring technological assets to nations of the Global South.<sup>51</sup> She has been instrumental in increasing the representation of forums like SCO and BRICS, by bringing in nations from the Global South and the ex-BRICS that is evolving into BRICS PLUS.<sup>52</sup> India's position as the champion of Global South extends beyond the issues of governance

and development and is reflected in a strong desire to serve as a 'link' between the developing world and its Western strategic partners, including the US and France.<sup>53</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Henry Kissinger in his work *World Order* specifically professed that “India will be the fulcrum of the twenty-first-century order”.<sup>54</sup> There are many amphitheatres of severe skirmishes between India and China ranging from the continental border disputes to maritime rivalry in the Indo-Pacific, disputation for the ideational hegemony over Asia to the sitting on the opposite poles on the world institutions to decide global issues of contestation. The newfangled, but the most prominent of all ‘domains of discord’ between the civilisational states of India and China is the soundless struggle of establishing monopolistic hegemony over the nature and substance of the global south. However, the Chinese flagship strategy of BRI is plateauing, the Chinese economy is faltering, its demography is aging, its political system is under stress, its global soft power and strategic advantages are declining, and its notion of ‘peaceful rise’ is sliding to become an open delusion. The BRI summit on October 18, 2023, was attended by only 24 leaders, as compared to 37 world leaders attending it in 2019.<sup>55</sup>

The leadership conundrum of the ‘global south’ puzzled in hypocritical China and behindhand Bharat amid poly-crisis of a ‘post-World Ordered’ world, coupled with Western struggle for sustenance, Eastern assertion of recognition, reinvigorated BRICS+ marks a strategic shift from the West to the Rest. In a world marred with the multiplicity of conflict ranging from civil wars in Africa and civil disconnect in Latin America, the Russia- Ukraine war engulfing Eurasia, the multiple theatres of the Israel- Palestine war involving global players like the US, China, Russia, and Iran, India is seen as the fulcrum of global stability, both economically and politically. India is not the fastest growing major economy, but the only country to have globally proclaimed that ‘this is not an era of war’. With its ‘Neighbourhood First’ policy she is making genuine efforts to stabilise and integrate the disintegrated South Asian region. India today has a global reach with a ‘Global Goodwill’, enormous and effective civilisational soft power, supremacy in space sciences and digital workforce, versatile diaspora with democracy, demography, development, and determination, and is poised to be the natural leader of the Global South.

India sees the employment of 'soft power' as a crucial way to show off its national might, increase its influence internationally, and fortify emotional bonds with the Global South. The term soft power popularized by Joseph Nye is sometimes referred to as the "second face of power," and it employs co-option techniques as opposed to aggression. Nye argues that a nation's foreign policy, political beliefs, and culture form the three pillars of its soft power. Whether the countries of the Global South accept China or India as their voice is a million dollar question that will entail time and researches on the subject.

## ENDNOTES

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- <sup>13</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid.
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- <sup>16</sup> Uzbekistan is a historically significant city on the Silk Road also known for its strategic importance.
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- <sup>22</sup> Murphy, D. C. (2022). *China's Rise in the Global South, The Middle East, Africa, and Beijing's Alternative World Order*. Stanford University Press, Stanford, California, pp.8-9
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>24</sup> Mearsheimer, J. J. (2001). *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. W. W. Norton & Company, New York, USA, p. 402
- <sup>25</sup> The term is also known as Zhongguo Complex, with *Zhongguo* meaning 'Middle Kingdom' in Chinese. This refers to a perception of China being the cultural and political core of the world, based on its rooted history and geopolitical importance as the most advanced and powerful civilization in the global system.
- <sup>26</sup> The Five Finger Policy refers to China's territorial claims over Tibet and its surrounding regions, and her policy of a tight control over the area, preventing thereby any political interference and potential independence movements.
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- <sup>29</sup> The term 'Pax Sinica' is the Latin representation for 'Chinese Peace' that refers to a hypothetical era of peace and stability under Chinese influence or leadership, similar to that of Roman 'Pax Romana' or the American-led 'Pax Americana'. With its initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), it envisions China as the central power shaping a global or regional order through its policies, economy, and cultural influence.
- <sup>30</sup> 'The surprising stagnation of Asia's middle classes' *The Economist*, Nov 21st 2024 <https://www.economist.com/asia/2024/11/21/the-surprising-stagnation-of-asias-middle-classes>
- <sup>31</sup> The IBSA Alliance refers to a trilateral partnership between India, Brazil, and South Africa to promote cooperation among these major democracies from Asia, Latin America, and Africa, established in 2003.
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