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BRICS and the Evolving Russia-India-China Security Agenda

Maxim Bratersky  and Georgy Kutuyev

Abstract: Russia India and China are paying more and more attention to international security issues. They have developed a broad common security agenda via cooperation through two international institutions created by them. BRICS serve as a mechanism for promoting their economic security interests, SCO is focused on traditional security issues. Along with forming a common position on main international security problems, Russia, India and China act as great powers and disagree on certain security matters mostly of regional and bilateral nature. Cooperation prevails in their foreign strategies, but they are unlikely to create a strong military-political alliance.

Introduction

The last decade in international relations was marked by the intensification of two alarming tendencies that have seriously undermined traditional international security regimes and led to a vacuum of security that will be filled, hopefully, by new security arrangements. The US-centric unipolar system has been deteriorating continuously, leaving little of whatever once existed. At the same time, the United States and its allies continue to undermine the international security regimes remaining from over from the previous bipolar epoch as though Washington is still able to control international security unilaterally.

As a result, the old system of global governance and international security treaties has been almost totally ruined, and a new system has not appeared because no new balance of power manifesting the potential of emerging power centre has yet taken shape. The global system is now in transition and a new architecture of international security is forming before our eyes. It faces staunch opposition from former hegemon and must cope with deep uncertainty over the roles, potential, and intentions of the new players.

BRICS, founded initially as an alliance of nations wanting to reform the international currency system, is developing its security agenda and joining the game of forming the principles of the international security order and architecture. This article will focus on the question of whether Russia, India, and China have formed a viable security agenda and the necessary institutional capacity to play a role in forming a new international security system and to serve collectively as one of the global security providers.¹ Since security has a significant economic dimension in the modern international environment, the concept of security in this article will involve a separate economic component. We

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understand security as a complex issue in which access to international financial infrastructure, international credit and markets is understood to be just as crucial as traditional security issues associated with military threats, nuclear issues and international terrorism.

Moreover, this article will argue that, today, issues of economic security often take precedence, and that BRICS is especially visible in shaping the economic aspect of the international security agenda. It presents itself as a unique and purely international association that has developed a distinct position and policies towards trade wars and financial conflicts. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization, another group of three cooperating countries, focuses on traditional security issues and complements the activities of BRICS.

This article draws on three associated but distinct bodies of literature. The sub-question of changing the international environment is analysed through the prism of literature—representing various schools of thought—that addresses multipolarity and measures for improving the world order. The issue of the growing use of international, politically motivated sanctions and geo-economic competition is the outcome of a mercantilist approach based on the concept of relative gains. Lastly, the analysis of BRICS policies draws on sources that look at BRICS as an international association and on the literature of individual BRICS member countries.

The changing international environment for RIC, 2007- 2019

The US-centric world order has collapsed. Although there is an impressive variety of opinions concerning the role that the United States and the West generally plays in the international system today, the majority of experts in fields ranging from international relations and economics to sociology and political science agree that the ‘American moment’ in international affairs has ended.²

It is difficult to establish an exact date when this happened, but at least one observer pointed to 2007 as the year when the decline of absolute American hegemony first became noticeable. It was in 2007 that Russia, openly expressed its discontent with and rejection of the US-led unipolar world.³

This public disagreement was critical because international regimes rely greatly on their acceptance by the other major powers in the international system.⁴ If ‘implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures’⁵ are not accepted anymore, the regime fails.

Another sign of the changing international environment in 2007 was the outbreak of the global financial crisis that originated within the US financial system and undermined global confidence that the international dollar-based system was being managed effectively. Together with military failures in Afghanistan and Iraq, unfortunate policies in the Middle East that led to the destabilization of the entire region and a massive offensive by the ISIS, and the failure of US efforts to export democracy, 2007 can be viewed as the year when cracks in the unipolar international system became visible. The United States and its allies did not look omnipotent anymore, and the mistakes they continually made only destabilized the international security system. One example was the intervention in Libya that sparked the migration crisis in the European Union.⁶

Others are becoming stronger

The expression ‘tectonic changes’ went viral in the early 2000s. It was coined by then US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to indicate that changes in the world system that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union had ended and that a new, stable international order under US leadership had finally been established.⁷ These tectonic changes were only beginning then, and they manifested themselves in the energetic economic and military rise of China, India, Brazil, and Russia. A historic shift of wealth and power from Europe to Asia began.⁸ According to Sergei Karaganov, ‘Along with the military, economic and political power shifting to Asia and Eurasia, cultural and moral authority is also flowing there.’⁹

In 2018 China, India, and Russia scored first, third, and sixth respectively in terms of GDP in the world economy.¹⁰ In terms of military power, Russia, China, and India occupy second, third, and fourth place respectively.¹¹ Their similar growth trajectories brought them together to form the BRICS group of countries in 2009 that has since become an influential international phenomenon.

The breakdown of arms control regimes and declining predictability in the security sphere

All international arms control regimes were established in what was then a bipolar world, so it came as no surprise that after the collapse of one of those poles the other was tempted to revise these regimes in its favour. A wise foreign policy approach would have been to resist this temptation, but just the opposite occurred beginning in the early 1990s. The United States and its allies opted to dismantle the foundations of military security in Europe and other parts of the world. The essential elements of strategic stability that they destroyed included the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), that not a single NATO country ratified. Another severe blow was the US withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM Treaty or ABMT), resulting in the deployment of US ABM systems aimed at Russian and Chinese counter-strike potentials. In 2019 came the de facto cancellations of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty between the US and Russia and chances are that the last remaining element of strategic stability—the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START)—will not be extended in 2021.

Remarkably, the US is dismantling security regimes with more than just Russia. Washington is pulling out of the nuclear agreement with Iran (the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action) and compromising the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) by discouraging it from obtaining first-hand data on alleged chemical attacks by government forces in Syria. In addition, the United States is even straining the relationship with its European NATO allies¹² and Japan¹³ by calling into question the Atlantic solidarity principle and the consolidated security stance of the West.

The declining effectiveness of international institutions

International institutions of all kinds have weakened significantly in recent decades. Decisions of the UN Security Council have often been ignored, including the case of the NATO attack against Yugoslavia in 1999 without a UN mandate and the

deliberate distortion of the UNSC mandate by NATO countries in the case of Libya in 2011. US troops remain on Syrian territory despite numerous protests by the government in Damascus. The UN Security Council has repeatedly stalemated over the Syrian conflict.¹⁴ UN peacekeeping forces have been trying unsuccessfully to establish order in Mali and the Democratic Republic of Congo.¹⁵

The development of a new generation of military technologies—including cyber weapons, drones, and robotized weapons—together with artificial intelligence has prompted states to bypass the existing restrictions in the arms race. International efforts to create a new framework for controlling these latest generation weapons have proven futile thus far. The group of international telecommunications experts (UN GGE) that met in 2017 failed for the first time to reach any firm conclusions and managed only to close with a record of their minutes.¹⁶

Along with this, international financial and development institutions are demonstrating a growing degree of politicization and bias. The World Bank halted all its programmes in Russia without notice in 2015 after the reunification of Crimea with Russia, even though Russia is a valuable member and contributor to the organization. In December 2015, the IMF violated its oldest rule of not providing financial aid to countries with outstanding sovereign debt. It did so as a favour to Ukraine under pressure from its Western political sponsors.

Leading politicians have decreasing confidence in multilateral institutions and are less inclined to muster the usual monetary contributions to maintain their functioning,¹⁷ Joint research by the UN and The World Bank in 2018 underscored the limitations of existing international institutions of security and conflict management and provided arguments in favour of increasing international investments in countries' indigenous peacekeeping capacities.¹⁸

Crisis of ideas

In 1989, Francis Fukuyama announced the end of ideological history and the global victory of the liberal idea.¹⁹ Thirty years later, Russian President Vladimir Putin stated that liberalism had become obsolete. 'It has come into conflict with the interests of the overwhelming majority of the population', he said.²⁰ Other ideas that dominated the public discourse and international debate in the 1990s and 2000s seem to be on the decline as well. The idea of a transnational society without national borders brought about by globalization²¹ has been losing supporters due to the rising tide of nationalism and global inequality. The idea of communism has been dead for some time now. The ecological 'green' idea has been unable to establish a firm international footing due to the disagreements between the developed and developing countries over the rules of development.

On the contrary, instead of the spread of global ideas, we witness the rise of local ideas like nationalism and religious fundamentalism that do not promise international cooperation and stability. There is a crisis of ideas regarding development and economic growth as well. The Washington consensus is no longer viewed as a universal recipe and other patterns of successful development lack the universality and attractiveness needed to serve as guidelines for an increasingly atomized international community.

The return of mercantilism and securitization of economic relations and the international currency system

Another significant development at the beginning of the 21st century was the gradual rejection of the liberal principles of international economy and free trade. The popularity of the liberal approach faded with time because it turned out that the relative gains from the new global economic order were going not to the creators and promoters of this order, as had been hoped, but to China and other countries who were supposed to have played a secondary, technical role in the world economy.

A new model adopted at the beginning of the 1990s resulted in the quick overflow of capital to countries with a shortage of capital, with the new system soon shifting wealth from Europe and the US to the Asia-Pacific region. This, in turn, caused a shift in power that brought into question the traditionally dominant military and security positions of the Western countries in this region of the world.

Such developments influenced the atmosphere in international relations and brought to the fore the question of whether the United States and its allies would be able to retain their military and economic superiority.²² The Trump administration launched a series of trade wars aimed at improving the United States' relative gains in trade with its partners and at weakening its geopolitical and geo-economic competitors. These actions focused on maintaining the US technological monopoly. It was because global production had been relocated from the US and Europe to China and other labour economies that were cheap at that time, the West's domination and its gains in the world system rested on control of the international financial system and its technological monopoly. All technological processes in the world were based on US-owned intellectual property, thereby guaranteeing the preponderance of the United States in the 'post-industrial' world.

China (Huawei, ZTE) challenged this superiority by offering its global technology platforms and was met with a violent response from the US. Russia faces increasing political pressure from the US aimed at reducing and eventually stopping Russian energy exports to Europe in order to clear the market for more expensive US products. Washington has also threatened India if it continues its military-technical cooperation with Russia. Turkey (not a BRICS country) is withstanding US pressure to prevent it from purchasing Russian air-defence systems.

In these times of global tectonic changes, leading world powers clash in competition, a struggle that will determine not only their place in world politics and the global economy, but also the shape of tomorrow's world and the rules that guide it. At the expense of others, governments are adopting increasingly mercantilist economic policies in an attempt to maximize the number of resources of all kinds available to them and to carve out their place in the emerging system. Economic relations are becoming very heavily influenced by security measures because the goal today is not only to gain economic advantage, but to weaken competitors as well. Due to their sheer size and importance, the BRICS countries, found themselves drawn into this struggle, at times against their will. Although some might not have distinct global ambitions, they serve as a potential resource for other competitors and thus must participate, willingly or not.

Russia, India, and China formulate a common security agenda

For the reasons given above, scholars from various fields are now paying increased attention to BRICS policy in economics, trade and industry²³ political relations,²⁴ and the effects of these developments for countries outside the block.²⁵ The emerging markets of the BRICS countries play a significant role in today's global economy and business.²⁶

The ideological unity that brought the BRICS countries together has helped establish collective understandings and values.²⁷ British scholar Andrew Hurrell (2006) refers to BRICS countries as 'soft balancers,' positing that they are united in a common strategic culture. Some scholars share his view, arguing that 'there are certainly significant elements of soft balancing in the security policy considerations and conduct of all four BRIC' countries.²⁸ The most notable institutionalization endeavour of the BRICS group came from the establishment of the New Development Bank. The bank offered 'preferential funding for infrastructure development in developing countries,' and shared equal voting rights between all five of the BRICS countries, with no one country being able to dominate the voting process.²⁹ The NDB was structured in a way that meant countries, preferably developing countries, could access the necessary loans without the stringent measures often imposed by Western-led institutions.³⁰ As an example of cooperation between the BRICS countries, as well as for the new type of global governance system they espoused, it was an unexpected success. It is, as Abdenur states, 'potentially ... a platform through which to establish a new normative framework',³¹ a system of institutions and regimes combined with a positive vision that can also be described as an ideology.

While BRICS presents itself as a potential new norm-setter in the international financial system for developing nations and the Global South, it also offers similar ideological norms for international security and the global order. It has the same ambition to introduce a new type of security framework. Ji Ping, the Deputy Secretary-General and Director of the Research Department of the China Peace and Development Foundation, states that 'the existing international security mechanism takes its root in the West ... only by developing a new security model can it be possible to deal with various security issues.'³² During the first five years that BRICS existed as a coalition, the security content of the Sanya Declaration and Plans of Action (2011) was limited to rather abstract joint positions on significant conflicts, such as those in Libya and Syria.³³ Since 2015, the BRICS countries have moved towards their first concrete joint initiatives, but these remain exploratory and highly topic-specific, such as the working group on combating terrorism.³⁴

Until as recently as 2017, the issue of fighting terror was virtually absent from the BRICS agenda.³⁵ All BRICS members would like more autonomy with respect to international security, both within and beyond their regions, and to be recognized as contributors to stability rather than free riders or 'spoilers' of international efforts for peace.³⁶ BRICS countries aspire to become more direct participants in norm-setting in international security, although they have engaged in different ways and to different extents in global normative debates.³⁷ There are internal as well as external constraints to the BRICS Security Cooperation Agenda. Despite the coalition members' increasingly apparent interest in cooperating on international security issues, BRICS is not a defence alliance. As a loose arrangement of rising powers, BRICS has no joint military force.³⁸

Some of the scepticism concerning the degree to which BRICS has institutionalized is focused on the coalition, even though it has only existed for less than a decade. The coalition's first objective is to enhance mutual understanding and confidence-building³⁹. The member countries' geopolitical interests and contexts differ greatly. This diversity is reflected, for instance, in their widely divergent relations with neighbouring countries.⁴⁰

The split between BRICS within the UN Security Council, while not necessarily an impediment to security cooperation, generally signifies a considerable divergence in their positions. 'All BRICS countries are key UN members in maintaining international peace and security. Both China and Russia are permanent members of the UN Security Council.'⁴¹ Such internal differences pose hurdles to cooperation on certain vital fronts.

Along with difficulties stemming from the diversity between BRICS members, the core of recent discussion in modern security studies concerns the debate between the approaches of the critical school of security and the political-realistic approach.⁴²

The traditional concept of national security that dominated the Cold War era and largely informed the protection of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states from military threats is less influential today.

Thus, a critical approach to security theory emerged.⁴³ Peeps and Vahan-Williams 'Critical Security Studies,'⁴⁴ show how critical security theories changed the focus of traditional security studies and expanded the subject of security to include political, environmental, social, and economic concerns.⁴⁵ Gender-based, post-colonial, and post-socialist approaches to the analysis of security problems have also emerged.⁴⁶

The Copenhagen School introduced the concept of 'securitization'⁴⁷ that opened the way to new perspectives on the analysis of security issues related to discourse and language. The concept of securitization formed the basis of the theory of regional security complexes developed by Ole Waever and Barry Buzan in the collective monograph *Region and Power*.⁴⁸

The development of economic relations as seen through the prism of securitizations has always been at the centre of BRICS policies and occupies the central place in the BRICS security agenda. The BRICS countries have developed an impressive agenda for the security of international trade, development, and the international currency system.

As seen in [Tables 1 and 2](#) (Annexures), the same countries belonging to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization ([Table 3](#)) develop policies on terrorism, drug trafficking, the illegal weapons trade, separatism and extremism, collective security issues, and the regional conflicts in Afghanistan and Syria. Together, these organizations form a comprehensive security agenda stretching from traditional security matters to recently securitized issues of international trade and finance.

Their relationship is marked by broad agreement on approaches to key international security issues, as well as some differences with regard to bilateral matters among the member countries.

Not only are BRICS member countries united by universal ideological principles and common positions on several international issues, but they also behave like typical great powers, maintain zones of influence, and compete between themselves. If there is ever to be a coherent security dialogue between Russia, India, and China,

the substance of that discussion will almost certainly have to be refracted through a prism of major power perspectives.

The sheer number of national perspectives and relationships that are interlinked among these powers also poses a significant challenge for Eurasian stability and cooperation. The harmonious relations between the three powers while not yet in peril, is, indeed, experiencing growing pains. This can be seen in Russia's level of influence with its former Soviet states in organizations like the SCO and in India's regional influence in the Himalayas and Bhutan. In both contexts, Chinese influence is at the heart of the issue. The challenges are compounded by the fact that both India and China have modernized rapidly and simultaneously. As both countries have grown economically, so has their clout in international affairs.

Of the three powers, China's goals are the most ambitious and deeply involve the other two powers purely as a result of their global scale.

However, China's multitude of foreign investments, development initiatives, and new relationships inevitably produce friction between pre-existing Eurasian relationships and alliances. As Russia looks eastward for a more substantive and grounded future for international cooperation, it is compelled to do so carefully and pragmatically towards both countries, while avoiding concessions that could leave Russia with the same regional and international relevance it has with the West. While this balancing act between the three parties concerns a massive spectrum of interests, identity plays a significant role in how the actions of the others are perceived. Therefore, the framework through which a coherent security dialogue must take place is one that views all parties' interests as relevant on the grounds of regional relationships, identities, and histories. Otherwise, the new multipolar world order risks being grounded in a natural asymmetry that would merely face east, rather than developing into an order that is genuinely multifaceted in its mechanisms of cooperation and power sharing.

The most visible disagreement between Russia and China concerns the increasing disparity in Central Asia. Although Russia and China agreed in 2015 to combine the Russia-sponsored Eurasian Economic Union and the Chinese One Belt One Road (OBOR) project, there is a certain uneasiness in Moscow about the growing Chinese investment in Central Asia. The lively public debate in Russia reveals growing concerns that the country is losing power relative to China and influence in post-Soviet Central Asia. The convergence discussed above, that sees the latter area tilting slowly towards China, could cause Russian policymakers to hesitate before committing to closer cooperation or future SCO enlargement. What is good for China—and perhaps even for the rest of the SCO—is of course not necessarily good for Russia.⁴⁹

At the 2014 CICA meeting in Shanghai, Xi Jinping advocated a new Asian security concept based on multilateralism as well as an 'Asia is for Asians' philosophy. Although it is unclear whether Xi's new Asian security concept can succeed beyond the CICA, the balancing goal of this new concept has been fulfilled. On the one hand, China has implied that the US-pivot policy was an outdated strategy that should be replaced by multilateralism and cooperative security. On the other hand, it is evident from Beijing's message to the outside world that the Chinese vision of the new security architecture will be more peaceful than widely predicted.⁵⁰

China constructs its strategic partnerships as respecting the sovereignty of all nations, focusing on 'mutual interest and common prosperity' and promoting trust and non-hegemonic behaviour, and the Chinese foreign-policy approach considers

multilateralism and multilateral bodies as components of an organizing principle attuned to the processes of globalization (*quanqiuhua*) and becoming multipolar (*duojihua*).⁵¹ At the same time, Chinese and Russian approaches to multipolarity imply closer relations between BRICS countries than with nations outside BRICS.

India, in turn, 'will likely have to follow a zigzag course, balancing between American demands, long-term friendship with Russia and its strategic necessities in the neighbourhood and beyond. It will sign defence pacts and conduct military drills with both the US and Russia (and other countries as well) to seize maximum opportunities from its relations with global powers. Otherwise, putting all eggs in one basket might create overdependence on one partner and ultimately not serve Indian interests well.'⁵²

India has a clear regional project with its increased involvement with ASEAN countries and regional matters in general. It cooperates with ASEAN countries primarily on counter-terrorism, cyber security, maritime issues, and economic development according to the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025.

ASEAN does have a problem regarding its leadership and the level of Chinese influence among member states. India opposes the OBOR project and argues that it is a continuation of historical Chinese attempts to control the region. India views itself as being at a geographical disadvantage for regional domination and hence, views these territorial developments as a direct encroachment upon its security.

However, India is very strong on the maritime front. Specifically, India views the construction of bases in Djibouti and Gwadar, and the secret plans of the Maldives Islands that were leased to a Chinese company for 50 years, as cause for concern.⁵³ Both Beijing and Moscow are very wary of India's ongoing involvement in the US Indo-Pacific initiative aimed at isolating China. In addition, a territorial dispute between China and India and the issue of Tibet are irritants in relations between the two great Asian powers.

Conclusion

The RIC countries formed two international institutions—BRICS and SCO—where they serve as anchor members but also interact with other countries. BRICS focuses on non-traditional security challenges, primarily issues of international currency exchange, trade and development, while the SCO is occupied with traditional security concerns such as terrorism, separatism, and drug and arms trafficking.

Together, these two platforms for cooperation between Russia, India and China address a broad international security agenda that covers practically all the security issues relevant to the emerging multipolar world—an order that values the sovereignty of nations and a diversity of ideologies. Their security agenda is remarkably non-ideological: they do not counterpose human rights to the collective rights of nations. This is attractive to countries engaged in nation-building and economic development.

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Notes

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Annexures

Table 1. BRICS

Year/Topic	International Finance/ Economics	Int Org/ Multilateral diplomacy	Developing countries	International trade	Sustainable development	Energy (oil, gas, etc)
2009	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2010	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2011	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2012	✓ but instability in the Eurozone; recovery after the GFC 2008; adopt policies to eliminate excessive global liquidity; facilitate cooperation	✓ Callsfor reform of UNSC	✓ Strengthened representation of emerging and developing countries in institutions of global governance	✓ Russia's accession to WTO	✓ MDGs	✓
2013	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2014	✓ NDB agreements	✓ G20, WTO coop+ IMF+ UNSC reform	✓ NDB	✓ BRICS Export Credit and Guarantees Agencies to increase trade opportunities among BRICS members, Economic Cooperation Strategy and a Framework of BRICS	✓ Africa	✓
2015	✓ NDB and CRA enter into force	✓ G20	✓ Builds closer ties with SCO	✓	✓ NDB shall serve as a powerful instrument for financing infrastructure investment and sustainable development projects	✓ Encouraging investment in priority area of renewable energy

(continued)

Table 1. (Continued).

Year/Topic	International Finance/ Economics	Int Org/ Multilateral diplomacy	Developing countries	International trade	Sustainable development	Energy (oil, gas, etc)
2016	✓	✓UNSC reform	✓Increase representation of developing countries in the UNSC	✓Emphasize importance of BRICS Roadmap for Trade, Economic and Investment Cooperation until 2020.	✓Adoption of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development	✓
2017	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2018	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Conclusions	BRICS has always focused on this. Two instruments of special importance were signed at the VI BRICS Summit : NDB and CRA (to sustain balance of payments)	Always highlighted cooperation with UN (+ SC reform),BRICS agenda prioritized G-20 cooperation, including IMF reform	Always addressed the issue of developing countries and the need to support them	BRICS has always focused on this BRICS has always focused on this . New Development Bank aimed at the financing of infrastructure projects and sustainable development in emerging economies and developing countries	BRICS has always focused on this . New Development Bank aimed at the financing of infrastructure projects and sustainable development in emerging economies and developing countries	Because the majority of the countries are energy-dependent, has always been a central topic of discussion
Year/Topic	Social integration	Global food security	Education and science	International law	Terrorism	Agriculture
2009	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2010	✓ (culture)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2011	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2012	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2013	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2014	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓Implementation of UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy	✓

(continued)

Table 1. (Continued).

Year/Topic	Social integration	Global food security	Education and science	International law	Terrorism	Agriculture
2015	✓ First meeting planned of BRICS Ministers of Labour and Employment	✓ Support UN General Assembly decision to declare 2015 the International Year of Soils + cooperation in FAO	✓	✓	✓	✓ BRICS Economic Partnership, cooperation in agriculture
2016		✓ Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT)	✓	✓	✓ Need to adopt	
2017			✓	✓	✓	✓
2018		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Conclusions	More focus in the past than in recent years	Rarely addressed	BRICS has always focused on this.	Rarely addressed	BRICS has always focused on this.	Rarely addressed

Table 2. BRICS.

Year/Topic	Security	Climate change	Nuclear energy	Space usage	Technology and innovation	Sport	Health	Infrastructure development	
2009									
2010		✓							
2011	✓+ reform of UNSC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
2012		✓More relevant with approach of UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) and the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity					✓		
2013	✓	✓		✓	Strengthen cooperation in the areas of ICTs		✓	✓ NDB infrastructure projects	
2014	✓		✓				✓	✓	
2015	✓		✓				✓	✓	
2016		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	
2017	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
2018	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Conclusions	Moderate interest	Has been addressed, but no real progress	Discussed more in recent years	Discussed more in recent years	Moderate interest	Rarely	discussed	Health issues have been addressed more in recent years (since 2014)	
Keen on infrastructure development									
Year/Topic	Business	Poverty	Renewable energy	Gender equality	Nuclear weapons	Drugs	Acts of violence against population	Cyber security	Regional conflicts
2009									
2010		✓							
2011			✓						

(continued)

Table 2. (Continued).

Year/Topic	Business	Poverty	Renewable energy	Gender equality	Nuclear weapons	Drugs	Acts of violence against population	Cyber security	Regional conflicts
2012		✓	✓			✓ Illicit traffic in opiates			✓ The Middle East and North Africa
2013	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓ (South Sudan + CAR + Congo + Syria + Arab-Israeli + Afghanistan + Iraq + Ukraine)
2014				✓	✓ Discussed the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons	✓ Proposal for setting up an Anti-Drug Working Group		✓	
2015	✓	✓	✓		Support the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of nuclear weapons	Implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action towards Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem	✓	Effective coordination against cyber-crime	Syria, Afghanistan, Israeli-Arab conflict, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Congo
2016	✓	✓							✓ Resolution of civil war in Syria in accordance with the "legitimate aspirations of the people of Syria"
2017	✓			✓			✓		✓
2018	✓	✓	✓						✓

(continued)

Table 2. (Continued).

Year/Topic	Business	Poverty	Renewable energy	Gender equality	Nuclear weapons	Drugs	Acts of violence against population	Cyber security	Regional conflicts
Conclusions	Allows each country which is party to BRICS to do business in its own manner	Not a priority	Because participants of BRICS are considered developing countries, the issue of renewable energy sources is not key	Rarely discussed	Not a priority		Rarely discussed	Briefly touched on the issue of cyber security, but did not focus on it	Started to address the issue of regional conflicts because the number increased in 2014

Table 3. Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

Year/Topic	Terrorism	Narcotraffic	Illegal weapon trafficking	Separatism and extremism	Collective security	Regional conflicts	Social field	Global food security	Financial/Economics	Development
2009 (Yekaterinburg)	✓ + Should not be confused with opposition to any religion	✓			The security of some countries should not be achieved at the expense of the security of others	Equality, mutual respect, non-interference in the internal affairs of sovereign states	✓	✓	✓	
2010 (Tashkent)	✓+ UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy	✓				✓	65th anniversary of WWII— lessons of the war; members strongly condemn attempts to revive fascist ideology and spread xenophobia, intolerance, extremism and terrorism for sinister political purposes		Recover from the world financial and economic crisis	

(continued)

Table 3. (Continued).

Year/Topic	Terrorism	Narcotraffic	Illegal weapon trafficking	Separatism and extremism	Collective security	Regional conflicts	Social field	Global food security	Financial/Economics	Development
2011 (Astana)	Effective cooperation has been established in the fields of security to confront terrorism, separatism and extremism , illegal trafficking in narcotics and weapons , and transnational organized crime// Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure in Tashkent//SCO Counter-Terrorism Convention// preventing the resurgence of extremist ideology and terrorist propaganda	Counter narcotics Strategy of the SCO 2011-2016	✓	Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism	A space of indivisible security for all states without exception ... rejection of attempts to ensure one's own security at the expense of others	✓	Cultural and humanitarian cooperation// Improved well-being of the population	Food shortage	Issues of instability // Address the effects of the global financial economic crisis and ensure steady balanced growth of national economies	✓

(continued)

Table 3. (Continued).

Year/Topic	Terrorism	Narcotraffic	Illegal weapon trafficking	Separatism and extremism	Collective security	Regional conflicts	Social field	Global food security	Financial/Economics	Development
2012 (Beijing)/Shanghai Spirit	✓	✓			Necessary to promote a new approach to security in IR based on mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and cooperation	✓	In accordance with their national legislation and relevant international obligations, member states shall protect the social and economic rights and interests of citizens of other member states residing within their borders	✓	+/ Economic globalization and sharing of benefits	Development
imbalances										
2013 (Bishkek)	✓ + Programme of SCO member states' cooperation in combating terrorism, separatism, and extremism for 2013-2015	✓ + psychotropic substances and their precursors; non-medical use; spread of drug addiction	✓	✓			✓	Volatility in food markets		SCO
Development Fund and SCO										
Development Bank 2014 (Dushanbe)	✓	✓		✓	Heightened regional and international security threats		✓	✓	✓	✓ Investments

(continued)

Table 3. (Continued).

Year/Topic	Terrorism	Narcotraffic	Illegal weapon trafficking	Separatism and extremism	Collective security	Regional conflicts	Social field	Global food security	Financial/Economics	Development
2015 (Ufa)	✓	✓	✓	✓	The need to build collective efforts to counter traditional and non-traditional security challenges and threats		✓ 70th anniversary of victory over fascism in the Second World War		✓	✓
2016 (Tashkent)	✓	✓					✓ Expanded tourism cooperation between Shanghai Cooperation Organization member states		✓	✓
2017 (Astana)	✓			✓	Important to build a multipolar and fair world order that would respond to the needs of each and every state		✓ Priority is to improve people's wellbeing and living standards		✓	✓
2018 (Qingdao)	✓			✓				✓	✓	✓
Conclusions	<p>✓ SCO Youth against Terrorism and Extremism' SCO is an organization for coping with security issues such as terrorism, extremism and separatism; hence, these topics are addressed every year</p> <p>The impossibility of ensuring security of one state at the expense of another is emphasized</p> <p>Most of the financial agenda devoted to strategies for coping with aftermath of 2008 world economic crisis</p>									