

BRICS OPPOSES EXCEPTIONALISM: CHINA

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: BRICS, IBSA and India

China on Monday sought to frame a joint statement from the Foreign Ministers of the BRICS [Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa] countries, who met virtually last week, as standing in opposition to what Beijing has increasingly hit out at “bloc politics” from the United States and the West.

The BRICS Foreign Ministers, at a virtual meet last week, put out a joint statement on multilateralism, in addition to the usual Ministers’ press statement. China’s Foreign Ministry on Monday said the idea behind the statement was to forge a common understanding among the BRICS countries when there were “so many different interpretations and definitions of multilateralism in the world”.

Ironically, among the targets of Beijing’s recent attacks on what it calls “selective multilateralism” is the India-Australia-Japan-U.S. Quad grouping, which Chinese officials have repeatedly criticised. India, which is the BRICS chair this year and will host this year’s leaders summit, which may also take place virtually, finds itself in a curious position of being described by Beijing as both a partner and a target in its recent emphasis on the importance of “multilateralism” and its criticism of calls for a “rules-based order”, voiced not only by the U.S. but also by the Quad.

Multilateral system

On the “different interpretations” of multilateralism, the “BRICS countries, as representatives of emerging markets and developing countries, have tackled the problem head-on and given their answer”, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said.

“The BRICS Joint Statement on Strengthening and Reforming the Multilateral System laid out the following principles,” he added. “First, it should make global governance more inclusive, representative and participatory to facilitate greater and more meaningful participation of developing and least developed countries. Second, it should be based on inclusive consultation and collaboration for the benefit of all. Third, it should make multilateral organisations more responsive, action-oriented and solution-oriented based on the norms and principles of international law and the spirit of mutual respect, justice, equality, mutual beneficial cooperation. Fourth, it should use innovative and inclusive solutions, including digital and technological tools. Fifth, it should strengthen capacities of individual States and international organizations. Sixth, it should promote people-centered international cooperation at the core. This is the answer given by the BRICS.”

He added that the BRICS countries were “indeed different from a few developed countries in their attitude towards multilateralism and multilateral cooperation.” “The BRICS countries stress the need to observe the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and oppose exceptionalism and double standard,” he said. “We are committed to extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, and oppose hegemonic bullying and zero-sum games. We pursue openness, inclusiveness and win-win cooperation, and reject bloc politics and ideological confrontation.”

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