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BRICS Leaders Unite Against US Tariffs and Iran Strikes

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RIO DE JANEIRO – Leaders of the BRICS nations gathered this week to send a clear message: the world's emerging economies will not stand idle as unilateral tariffs and military strikes threaten global stability.

In a joint statement issued Sunday, the BRICS bloc, Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, voiced “serious concerns” about the surge in unilateral trade measures. While the declaration avoided naming United States President Donald Trump outright, its target was unmistakable. Trump has recently threatened to impose sweeping import duties on allies and rivals alike, rattling markets and straining diplomatic ties.

“Unilateral tariffs risk harming not only our economies but also the foundations of the global trading system,” the statement warned. For many BRICS members, the stakes are high. Together, the group accounts for about half the world’s population and 40 percent of economic output.

Beyond trade, the summit also condemned recent Israeli-United States military strikes against Iran, describing them as destabilizing at a time when tensions in the Middle East are already dangerously high. While Iran is not among the original BRICS founders, its growing ties to the group have added another layer of complexity to the bloc’s agenda.

Still, unity among BRICS nations remains a challenge. Iran expressed reservations about the joint statement, particularly over language on Israel, while Saudi Arabia’s foreign minister chose to skip the discussions entirely. Saudi Arabia, a key United States ally and major buyer of American military hardware, has often walked a delicate line between maintaining close ties with Washington and engaging with BRICS partners.

The summit’s impact was further muted by the absence of two of its most influential figures. Chinese President Xi Jinping, who has never missed a BRICS summit during his 12 years in power, opted not to attend in person. Russian President Vladimir Putin, facing war crimes charges over the conflict in Ukraine, also stayed away, addressing the gathering by video.

Despite these absences, BRICS leaders emphasized their determination to remain a force in shaping global governance. They also called for new regulations around artificial intelligence, warning that such transformative technology should not become the exclusive domain of wealthy nations and powerful corporations.

As divisions grow among traditional powers, the BRICS alliance appears intent on asserting a more independent voice, one that challenges old assumptions about who sets the rules in the global economy.

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