RESEARCH ARTICLE

the rest: journal of politics and development
2026 | 16(3) Special Issue | 385-396
www.therestjournal.com

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Centre for Strategic Research and Analysis | CESRAN International

Trump's Tariff War and BRICS: Disruption, Diversion, or Opportunity?

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KEYWORDS

Trump Tariff War
BRICS Economic Bloc
Global Trade Disruption
Strategic Diversion
South-South Cooperation
Multipolar Economic Order

Received January 12, 2026
Revised September 7, 2026
Accepted October 15, 2026

ABSTRACT

The paper discusses how the U.S. tariff policies under President Donald Trump affect the BRICS economic bloc (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) and its extended family. The research asks whether the Trump tariff war violated global trading norms, served as a distraction tactic to avoid geopolitical rivalry, or enabled economic partnership among emerging economies through negligence. The article will present three related arguments. First, Trump's tariffs disrupted international supply chains and undermined faith in multilateral trade principles, particularly those of the World Trade Organisation. Second, the tariff action, strategically focused on the spillover effects of the altered trade trend, targeted not only the BRICS but also other nations. Third, this was made possible by the BRICS countries' union into an alternative trade cooperation framework, in currencies and through South-South collaboration, reinforcing their policy of building a multipolar economic order. The qualitative policy analysis has been applied to an investigation of significant financial indicators, including trade flows, tariff statistics, and investment schemes, as well as the official proclamations and institutional reactions of the BRICS members. The article concludes that Trump's tariff war was undoubtedly a massive tsunami for the BRICS countries and ultimately shifted the bloc toward greater cohesion and a more assertive role in the global arena.

1. Introduction

Donald Trump's re-election to the White House has already been a major blow to the post-Cold War agreement on trade liberalisation that underpins the global economic framework. The turning point in that shift has been the new, more serious use of tariffs as a significant tool of American statecraft in the economy. Since being elected back to power, President Trump has removed tariffs on major trading partners, drastically reducing them to the point that the average American tariff rate is almost 17 per cent, the highest levels of tariffs experienced since the 1930s, when the term tariffs was initially coined. These, as revenge for centuries of trade deficits and as part of re-establishing home-based manufacturing, are at least not a normal trade war. They point to a long-term repositioning of U.S. trade policy that affects global supply chains, multilateral institutions, and the political economy of development. Trump's tariff policy is grounded in mercantilist views, which see national weakness in the trade deficit and argue that national interests should be pursued through bilateral leverage rather than multilateral rules (Nelson, 2019). Tariffs on steel, aluminium, cars, and other manufactured goods (most of which are of Chinese origin) have disrupted conventional trade patterns and created uncertainty in the global economy. On the one hand, supporters of such measures believe they rescue American workers and industries. Still, opponents argue that they raise supply prices, trigger retaliation, and undermine the rules-based trading system, as exemplified by the World Trade Organisation. Beyond the immediate economic effects, Trump's tariffs have taken on a strategic dimension and have become increasingly part of the geopolitical game, the

technological battle, and the struggle for economic sovereignty.

Against this backdrop of rising trade wars, the BRICS grouping has gained new relevance. Originally founded on the casual association of five large economies of a significant size, that is, Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, BRICS has since developed to denote a broader-based alliance that intends to provide the Global South with a more pronounced voice in the world, making economic policies. The latest expansion has brought in new members in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, driven by growing dissatisfaction with Western-dominated organisations and the need to find alternative ways to collaborate (Ullah et al., 2024). BRICS countries account for a large share of the world's population, output, and trade, and the bloc may offer a solution to the problem of past economic powerhouses. A significant analytical dilemma lies in the overlap between the Trump tariff war and the BRICS expansion. On the one hand, higher tariffs and insecurity at international borders risk undermining export-led growth policies, blocking investment, and exacerbating vulnerabilities, particularly in developing economies with low fiscal buffers. By contrast, the re-emergence of the United States as a proponent of free trade may accelerate ongoing processes in BRICS: trade diversification, settlement in local currencies, institutional innovation through vehicles such as the New Development Bank, and greater attention to South-South cooperation. This article assesses whether the current moment is a crisis, a strategic inflexion point, or a window of opportunity, based on an analysis of Trump's tariff policy and the evolving economic policies of BRICS members. It also contributes to broader arguments on economic nationalism, great-power politics, and the future of global financial management in an increasingly fragmented world.

2. Background: Trump's Tariff Policies

2.1 Tariffs as a Policy Instrument

Conventionally, tariffs have been used sparingly as a policy instrument to safeguard domestic industries, balance trade, and support political will in economic policies worldwide (Balassa, 1965). Nevertheless, during Donald Trump's presidency, tariffs ceased to be seen as a supporting tool in trade policy. They became a pillar of the American state's economic policy. The tariff policy was unprecedented in its frequency and extent. Most importantly, for the first time in decades, Trump defied the liberal trade policy that had guided American policy. By 2025, the average tariffs in the United States will have soared dramatically as part of the new America First agenda. The objective above is to save American manufacturing jobs and end the chronic trade deficit, particularly with China (AP News) unlike the tariff wars in the old days, which were limited to specific sectors or dumping, as in the case of Trump, the Trump tariffs were an all-encompassing deal covering as many products and partners as possible (Tower et al., 2025). Nominal tariff rates and actual tariff rates rose to 50 per cent or more on certain products, such as steel, aluminium, and copper, to bolster local industrial capacity and reduce reliance on foreign supply chains.

This policy was characterised by tariffs imposed on large emerging economies (Bown et al., 2014). China remained the primary target amid intensifying strategic and technological rivalry, and India was already feeling targeted pressure from tariffs and further aggravation of economic and geopolitical confrontations (The Indian Express). Moreover, Trump hinted at the possibility of imposing tariffs on countries perceived to favour the BRICS, which are portrayed as being anti-American, and further linking trade policy directly to geopolitics (Bouoiyour et al., 2018). Proponents argue that these tariffs are a bargaining tool to safeguard national interests and restore trade equilibrium. Opponents, however, claim they disrupt global supply chains, raise input prices, strain consumers, and trigger retaliatory measures, making the global trading system even more unstable.

2.2 Scope of Trump's Tariff Escalation

Trump's tariff policies also signalled an abrupt shift from targeted trade remedies to systematic tariff escalation, with massive-scale implications (Siriopoulos et al., 2025). Although China was the primary target, the sweeping tariffs under the U.S. Section 301 provision went beyond a U.S.-China

bilateral trade war. Over time, the tariff measures began to extend their influence to other notable emerging economies, including key BRICS players, posing a greater challenge to the existing international trade order. India, for example, imposed high tariffs on the mutual export of many commodities, especially automobiles, auto parts, steel products, and certain industrial commodities (Chakraborty et al., 2020). Part of these moves were predetermined by the reaction to the Indian market tariff regime and tariff barriers but, in fact, were much higher than ordinary tariff rates of the Indian market on the major trading partners of the U.S. This withdrawal of the favoured trade impressions with India and a doubling of the duties were part of the stress to emphasise the way the increase of the tariffs was perceived as a means of coercion instead of a corrective measure of an exceedingly restrictive kind.

Retaliatory pressure also hit the Brazilian market, particularly in the steel, aluminium, and agricultural sectors (de LT Oliveira, 2017). Because it was not a concern in the U.S., trade grievances, the threat of tariffs, and the discriminatory nature of exemptions left exporters in Brazil with little to do. It identified the confusion in Trump's trade policy. The same type of pressure was felt across the global supply chains, and companies had altered sourcing strategies in response to the sudden increase in tariffs. All this, along with heightened U.S. protectionism, raised concerns that trade would become fragmented. The Trump administration also imposed punitive tariffs on the rest of the BRICS economies, along with China, to undermine bilateral dispute resolution and replace it with a framework of pressure (Harmanci, 2025). The result has been greater instability in the world trade regime, reduced confidence in multilateral trade regimes, and stronger incentives to diversify markets, increase trade with other countries, and deepen economic ties among the countries involved. In this regard, Trump's tariff increase not only transformed U.S. trade relations but also the strategic choices of the BRICS economies in an increasingly competitive trade world.

3. Economic Impact on BRICS Members

3.1 China

3.1.1 Trade Exposure and GDP Vulnerability

China is the most susceptible BRICS member to U.S. tariffs because it is most integrated into the global manufacturing supply chain and has historically exported large volumes to the United States (Walmsley & Minor, 2020). Research indicates that, among BRICS exports to the United States, approximately 73 per cent are from China, underscoring its undue exposure to tariff increases under United States trade laws. Tariffs on Chinese goods have been highly heterogeneous, with the highest rate of 145 per cent applied to some goods, and a temporary agreement has reduced tariffs to approximately 30 per cent (Imbruno, 2016). These tariffs have compromised the competitiveness of the large manufacturing sectors and, more so, the electronics, machinery, and intermediate inputs in the U.S., since they have raised the cost for importers in the U.S. and have stimulated the supply chain reaction. China relies on export-led growth, so these tariff shocks are easily transmitted to other parts of the economy. The decline in foreign demand has led to significant drops in manufacturing activity, damping production and further reducing GDP growth expectations. China has responded by diversifying its destination markets, strengthening trade relationships in Asia and with other developing economies, and accelerating the shift toward domestic consumption to offset the slowdown in U.S. export growth.

3.1.2. Strategic Response

Short-term stabilisation and long-term structural adjustment have been part of a multifaceted, ambivalent response by China to the economic pressures generated by the Trump tariff war. The Chinese export trade began to diversify as American tariffs choked demand. It has improved trade relations with ASEAN economies and with the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) (Gong, 2019). The reorientation also strengthened China's power in regional and South-South trade relations and contributed to the decoupling of the Chinese economy from the U.S. market. At the same time, China renewed its pursuit of technological independence, particularly in key strategic areas such as

semiconductors, artificial intelligence, and premium manufacturing. The Made in China 2025 plans and later the innovation plans would safeguard the economy by opening it to external supply chains and export bans and would help to ward off the weaknesses experienced during the tariff war (Huimin et al., 2018). Beijing focused on bilateral bargaining on the non-diplomatic front to secure special tariff concessions and protection for major export goods, particularly high- and middle-value goods. These moves were supported by national stimulus packages that included infrastructure investment, credit stimulus, consumption, and growth-oriented policies. The slowdown in American demand can be measured by its effect on the Chinese economy. However, the net impact of the domestic demand increase and export diversion has put the economy in a strong position to absorb shocks and remain relatively well grounded. As we have seen with BRICS, China can use tariff breaks in the long run to create diversification, resilience, and strategic independence, rather than a broken economy.

3.2 India

A case in point is India as a BRICS economy: the intricate assessment of the economic impacts of a fresh tariff war on Trump (Athukorala, 2020). In an expected turn of events, India's exports to the United States shot up amid anticipated interference and constant tariff threats. This is ahead of an estimated 27 per cent growth in Indian exports to the U.S. alone in April 2025, as reported by India Briefing (Singh, 2025). This growth is not structurally resilient; it is more likely a diversionary effect as companies rush shipments, hoping tariffs will rise further. This premium export buffer will even cushion the export flows in the short term, but not in the long term.

The Indian export basket is diversified and therefore resilient to unexpected shocks (Sangita, 2018). It has a few traditional and labour-intensive sectors, including textiles and garments, high-value pharmaceutical goods, and IT and business services, that can compete with those of other organisations worldwide. This diversification is not dependent on a single product, allowing Indian exporters to adjust capacity to respond to changes in trade barriers. Moreover, given the market size and growth in the Indian region, domestic demand in most highly export-reliant economies cushions the impact. Therefore, external protectionism that has a macroeconomic impact is also cushioned. This strength has not been measured in terms of sustainability. The price competitiveness of the Indian economy, particularly in export-based production, could be reduced in regions where greater focus is placed on tariffs. India is not yet at the same level in global value chains as China, so it cannot offset the cost increase in volumes or its supply chain advantage. This means Indian firms can consider exploring market policies amid long-term pressure toward protectionism.

In this respect, trade uncertainty in the Trump era may hasten India's strategic refocusing on South-South trade. Strengthening trade relations with BRICS, Southeast Asia, Africa, and the Middle East can mitigate the risk of being subject to U.S. policy fluctuations (Ahmad et al., 2024). Nevertheless, such a pivot requires long-term investment in logistics and trade, and support for regional trade agreements. The tariff war, as established by Trump, is neither disruption in its purest form nor opportunity in its purest form in India, but a transitional period in which temporary gains obscure long-term structural weaknesses that will persist in India's trade policy.

3.3 Brazil

The U.S.-China trade war and worldwide tariff increases have directly affected Brazil, with American tariffs on various Brazilian goods at 50 per cent or more, amid rising political antagonism (Kurniawan & Luthfi, 2023). Aggregate interests that have been hit include the agricultural sector and the export of industrial products, and they are unable to compete in the conventional U.S. market. The affected commodities include soybeans, meat, and steel, which threaten Brazilian export earnings and cast doubt on Brazilian producers. The Brazilian leaders have stressed that economic collaboration within BRICS needs to be further strengthened as a buffer (Bernal-Meza, 2019). The bloc's built-in trade relations and policies aimed at offsetting the additional tariffs imposed by the United States are a strategic move towards multilateral stability. Beyond BRICS, Brazil is also

initiating trade relations with China, its largest trading partner, which will significantly affect Brazilian trade and reduce counterdependence on the US market. Investment in infrastructure and bilateral arrangements in the Asia-Pacific region are also driving change. Although this has faced temporary backlash and incurred physical costs, its engagement with BRICS and other world markets enables Brazil to turn tariff pressure into strategic opportunities. The country's approach shows that emerging economies can resist external trade shocks by building multilateral relations and diversifying markets.

3.4. Russia and South Africa

The effects of the tariff war in the United States have not been shared equally among the BRICS, with Russia and South Africa experiencing direct and closely related impacts (Tran, 2025). The direct effect of the American tariffs on Russia cannot be overstated, since Russia is not a major importer from the United States. These tariffs are further compounded by the heightened geopolitical and economic environment. Current Western sanctions and U.S. tariffs add to obstacles to trade and investment by making it difficult to enter the Russian market (Sarfraz, 2025). This, in turn, will help mitigate the immediate financial risk. The total effect, however, will enhance Russia's motivation to diversify its economic relations, particularly in the BRICS and other non-Western contexts. South Africa is, in turn, more vulnerable to even more drastic shocks in its open economy's commodities and automotive sectors (Wakeford, 2013). The effects of price volatility, demand loss, and logistical problems have been felt across these industries. However, these industries' exposure to U.S. tariffs is moderate. As industries restructure to adapt to the new tariff environment, global supply chains will be reformed. These shifts may be manageable, but they highlight the weaknesses of export-dependent industries in emerging economies and the importance of trade flexibility.

These challenges, however, have not thwarted the two nations, and Russia and South Africa have sought to leverage the deficiencies of the American tariff war to their advantage in regional and intra-BRICS cooperation. They will also leverage trade ties with other BRICS members and other fast-growing emerging markets to reduce reliance on Western economies and other interested trade partners. The move will not only counter the short-term economic impacts of tariffs, but also broader economic shocks. However, a long-term effect will also be felt, as it will create diversified trade relations and regionalisation, resulting in economic self-sufficiency for the BRICS.

4. Disruption: Breaking Established Trade Patterns

4.1 Supply Chain Disruptions and Economic Costs

The Trump tariff war has severely disrupted usual trade patterns, particularly for companies that depend on imports from BRICS countries (Contractor, 2025). These abrupt changes in the cost of obtaining raw materials and intermediate goods have prompted businesses to rearrange their supply chains more rapidly. To avoid tariffs, many companies have had to identify alternative suppliers, re-architect their supply chains, or even relocate some production to another country. These expenses for such enterprises are small: to win new supplier contracts and invest in supply-chain tracking technologies, they need money, and these costs are calculable. Costs, however, come from pausing operational processes. Other victims of the world economy's agony are individual companies. The expenses of these undertakings are negligible: taking advantage of new contracts with suppliers and investing in supply-chain tracking technologies cost money, and these expenses can be quantified. However, delays in operational processes also incur costs. The global economy is not the only one affected; individual companies are, too. The market has been volatile since the tariff announcements, as investors reassess risks and rebalance portfolios amid uncertainty about trade flows and production costs. Significant movements in commodity and equity markets after major tariff announcements show that trade-related sectors are sensitive to policy shocks. They may include the inefficiencies introduced into the economy by the tariffs, which may be used as an example of how the impact on the global supply chain through the disruption of trade by the tariffs has a ripple effect and how the firm and the entire national economy must react promptly to the situation.

4.2. Labour Market Effects

Tariff escalation has both short- and long-term effects on the labour market by altering trade patterns (Contractor, 2025). In academic modelling, any increase in trade barriers, such as those introduced by the Trump administration, would adversely affect employment, particularly in low-skilled sectors and also in export-oriented industries that depend on foreign orders. Analogues suggest that the long-term effect of a permanent tariff is job losses for millions of individuals, which are not evenly distributed across regions and sectors. Even U.S. workers in industries not threatened by imports may see temporary employment gains from reduced import competition. Still, these benefits are usually offset by higher input prices and retaliatory tariffs that can undermine downstream employment. BRICS and other export-reliant emerging economies are even more exposed, as limited access to major markets restricts production and jobs in manufacturing, agriculture, and service sectors tied to international trade. Secondly, sectoral boundaries do not confine labour displacement: inter-industry links suggest that the influence of job pressures can be indirectly imposed on non-trade-exposed industries. Overall, the labour market impacts of discontinuous patterns of trade show the imbalanced nature of benefits and losses, with the immensely significant outcome that, despite being politically engineered in the framework of local protection, the tariff wars can cause significant global job shocks, particularly in the region of the vulnerable labour groups of low skills.

4.3. Diplomatic Strains and Multilateralism Challenges

The present U.S-China tariff war has not only disrupted trade movements in the world economy, but it has also put a lot of pressure on the multilateral institutions that are established to ensure constant trading standards (Steinbock, 2018). BRICS have expressed concerns about the rise of one-sided protectionist practices, arguing that they fail to comply with World Trade Organisation (WTO) agreements. It undermines the value of rule-based exchange and the reputations of multilateral dispute-resolution regimes. The tariff war kills bilateral and plurilateral negotiations that have long eased tensions between large economies (Angwaomaodoko, 2024). This mistrust that transpires reveals the group's decision-making in response to external shocks. The crisis is a symptom of a diplomatic and economic meltdown in the BRICS: multilateralism gives them the possibility to act as a unit, and the growing instability of American trade policy risks drawing them into bilateral conflicts and causing economic losses. In addition, rising tariffs will push other trading partners to take similar protectionist measures, which can trigger a tariff-retaliation domino effect. BRICS countries also face this uncertainty, as they must balance loyalty to their countries with the need to invest more in strengthening global trade stability (Basile & Cecchi, 2019). Fundamentally, the trade war shows that multilateralism is vulnerable to predatory economic policies in the unilateralist system, and that the BRICS system needs to respond accordingly.

5. Diversion: Strategic Targeting and Geopolitical Implications

5.1. Tariffs as Geopolitical Tools

Although tariffs have long been seen as an act of economic protectionism, the Trump administration turned them into a geopolitical tool (Janusch & Mucha, 2017). The tariffs also served another purpose beyond protecting local industry; they demonstrated U.S. will and might in the world, particularly vis-à-vis China and the BRIC countries. Trump's tariffs on Chinese goods and threats to other emerging economies signalled that the U.S. must counter China's accelerated economic growth and threats to U.S. dollar hegemony (Kim, 2019). This broader strategic calculus drew the loudest outcry from commoners over BRICS programs and the dangers of potential tariff sanctions if countries failed to align with U.S. interests. In this respect, the tariffs had little to do with rectifying the trade imbalance but rather with regulating international activity and supporting U.S. hegemony. One such effort by the administration to ensure the diversionary effect is implemented is applying economic pressure, which requires affected countries to consider alliances, trade patterns, and policy choices. The instruments of coercive diplomacy are also characterised by the duality of illustrating

how economic instruments can be strategically deployed as a geopolitical tool, not only to change the nature of trade but also the parameters of the world power struggle.

5.2. Response from BRICS Leaders

Rising U.S. tariffs have served as an economic weapon in the hands of BRICS leaders, who have viewed them as a calculated strategic attack on the bloc's rise on the global scene (Lieber, 2014). The tariffs initiated by Chinese President Xi Jinping resulted from structural trade tensions that highlighted the need for BRICS nations to run their own financial frameworks and value chains (Hooijmaaijers, 2021). Russian President Vladimir Putin also said these indicate strategic thinking aimed at containing BRICS geopolitical interests, rather than pursuing lawful trade interests (Denisov et al., 2019). All these responses indicate an emerging disengagement between the BRICS agenda and U.S. trade policy. The diplomatic push is the latest trade-off of importance in building the power of collective economies, multiplying multilateral action, and providing an opportunity to be more self-realising to change the orientation of world interactions, which makes BRICS not only a solid force of resistance to external forces but an engine of the new multipolar world (Gatlin, 2024). That concept: on the one hand, they can influence global markets; on the other, they can be seen as instruments of signalling and positioning (Mouslim, 2025). Trump's era of tariffs is a good

5.3. BRICS Expansion and Strategic Realignment

The latest formation of the BRICS bloc, which has embraced Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Ethiopia, and Indonesia, is a favourable realignment of global economic management (Rabczun, 2024). It is not only an expansion of the bloc's geographic and economic reach but also a shift toward pluralism and multipolarity in decision-making, in which other voices in the economic sphere are taking over the dominant position previously held by the West. This expansion has been sought on the strategic side following the U.S.'s increased pressure through tariffs. The tariffs imposed on member states are not a protectionist tool but a targeted effort to get trade back on track; hence, they should ensure that member states reconsider their economic reliance (Baur & Flach, 2023). BRICS creates a route for trade and investment that is not pegged to West-dominated markets, thereby safeguarding its members against unilateral economic pressure (Nuruzzaman, 2020). The chiefs of the extended bloc are also concerned with how to maximise trade among themselves, coordinate investment policy, and develop financial instruments that help them conduct business without necessarily transacting in U.S. dollars. This shift suggests that what could otherwise be called a derailment or distraction for the United States is, instead, accelerating BRICS unification and its establishment in the world order. Lastly, bloc building responds to the external economic drought and the proactive restructuring of the international economic setup in a multipolar world (Peters, 2023).

6. Opportunity: Strategic Autonomy and BRICS Integration Catalysing

Even though the U.S. tariffs are being perceived as an act of economic aggression, the BRICS are already viewing them as an incentive to greater integration and strategic autonomy. The trade wrangles have allowed the bloc to re-establish its economic priorities, improve internal cooperation, and become less susceptible to exogenous shocks.

6.1 Deepening Intra-BRICS Trade

BRICS states have also sought alternative markets in the tariff world and have lobbied within their bloc (Robinson, 2015). China's move into ASEAN markets, the strength of Indian exports, and Brazil's push into non-Western markets show that economic restraint among the BRICS is also a defensive weapon against the outside world. By developing an even more closely knit trading system, the BRICS countries can mitigate the impact of unilateral tariffs, enhance supply chain stability, and balance the international trade system (Leal-Arcas, 2008). These activities, along with reducing dependence on the traditional Western market, provide new avenues for mutual development, investment, and innovation within the bloc.

6.2. Financial Independence and De-Dollarization

Another relevant factor for opportunities is financial independence. Such tensions, brought about by the tariffs, have accelerated the rate at which evasion is being fought in the context of cross-border transactions and settlements using the U.S. dollar. BRICS countries are also making payments through bilateral and multilateral arrangements in local currencies. This de-dollarisation trend runs counter to the historical dominance of Western financial systems and gives the global economy greater freedom to finance trade (Mosharrafa, 2024). These economic policies make the BRICS more than mere economic pragmatists by enabling greater independence in global finance and reducing currency volatility that world powers can impose.

6.3. Economic Diversification and Structural Resilience

It has also helped drive structural readjustment at the national level due to trade tensions. China has been spending more on technological innovation and the domestic market to reduce external shocks (Fu et al., 2016). India's Make in India program is one effort to build its manufacturing capability and export portfolio. Amid tariff disputes, Brazil has been shifting its economic partners toward non-traditional Western markets in Asia and Africa. All this will make BRICS members more resilient, and each state in the bloc will be better positioned to absorb economic shocks. Each member's stability balances the others. Generally, the BRICS countries are turning an undesirable position into an opportunity to develop a strategy in the event of a tariff issue (Streltsov et al., 2021). Increased intra-bloc trade, financial autonomy, structural resilience, and reinforcement have continued to make the bloc more integrated and self-reliant. These will not only help it defend against external economic pressure but, in the multipolar world, also place the new economies at the centre of world trade, finance, and development. What began as an aberration of U.S. policy has become a catalyst for long-term strategic change in BRICS.

7. Discussion: Diversion, Disruption, or Opportunity?

Tariffs introduced by the Trump administration have indeed caused havoc in global markets (Bown & Irwin, 2019). This is the bump we are taking due to supply chain disruptions, higher manufacturer prices, and a mix of requests across developed and emerging economies. BRICS countries felt this firsthand, as sectors such as Brazilian agriculture, Indian technology services, and Chinese manufacturing depended on exports. The sector was hit, causing lost demand, delays, and speculation about foreign contracts. It was also counterproductive for the industries hit by the sudden rise in tariffs, and it only signalled broader economic impacts. These actions made diplomatic relations more complex because they obliged BRICS states not to act but to step forward, which can be seen as a new stage in the integration of trade and politics.

Nonetheless, beyond the destruction of economies, it is marked by the value of knowing that tariffs are a calculated deflection of the new power impulse. Most mainstream discussion of tariffs is spreading the notion that they represent anti-BRICS and anti-dollar policy, and that U.S. policy cannot be understood merely as a stereotypical adaptation of the same strategy, but as a more complicated geopolitical choice. These will socialise global orientations to help restrict the multipolar economies of the world by limiting the economic prosperity of the BRICS and promoting U.S. hegemony in the global economy. This has been seen by the Brazilian, Indian, Chinese, Russian, and South African leaders as an attempt to water them down. As a result, countries are making a lot of noise to increase intra-bloc integration and coordinate strategic initiatives.

These tensions have been undermining opportunities. Already, BRICS nations are under pressure to diversify trade, build regional supply chains, and reduce over-reliance on Western financial institutions because of tariffs. The disruption will foster resilience and innovation, such as new payment systems, intra-BRICS investment funds, and unified diplomatic relations. This is because, at some point, the bloc will be able to offset the West's economic domination by redefining motivations for joining and other aspects of global domination. Overall, Trump's proposed tariffs can be seen as a single display of bewilderment, distraction, and luck. Meanwhile, while they have

already provoked an immediate economic and diplomatic response, they also serve a more distant strategic goal of trade policy and open opportunities to bring the BRICS countries closer. The other replies in the block will recreate a worldwide trend of economic integration and transform a non-enduring crisis into a long-term strategic position.

8. Conclusion

The Trump tariff war is a complex phenomenon beyond mere economic destabilisation. Although the short-term effects of escalated tariffs have already been felt in disrupted trade flows, inventory shortages, and rising business costs globally, other effects are felt at the geopolitical strategic level. These measures have been seen as tools of economic statecraft, signalling a desire to exert leverage over key emerging economies, including BRICS members. However, such a strategy has had significant side effects. Rather than weakening BRICS countries, the raised tariffs have accelerated efforts to strengthen intra-bloc cooperation, diversify trade ties, and explore alternative financial and investment systems to reduce dependence on Western-dominated systems. Brazilian President Lula da Silva is denounced as a tariff blackmailer, and China, India, Russia, and South Africa have implemented similar approaches, reflecting a concerted effort to fight and change strategies simultaneously.

These United States policies are open to debate about what they will entail in the future. Their impact on the economies of home countries, on the sustainability of the world economy, and on the rules-based global trading system will depend on the emerging patterns of diplomatic relations, on the sustainability of the supply chain, and on how developed and developing countries will be able to work in the volatile geopolitical environment. The obvious thing, though, is that the BRICS bloc has been using this turmoil to build greater economic independence and project the image of a powerful multipolar force. In this respect, the Trump tariff war could have inadvertently realigned global economic power. By turning disruption into opportunity, BRICS is showing that strategic alliance-building can facilitate integration and disrupt the dominance of old, staid economic hierarchies, leading to a more multipolar economic order in the 21st century.

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