

Introduction

The road to multipolarity is giving rise to a new global ecosystem—one that deserves close attention. Beyond the dominant powers like China and the United States, or declining ones such as Russia, and beyond mid-sized actors firmly embedded in the Western sphere—like Japan, South Korea, Israel, Australia, and the EU—a distinct group has emerged. These are the *swing states*, reflection of a new geopolitical landscape no longer defined by rigid blocs, but by flexible economic connections and global scale synergies that don't require exclusive strategic alignment.

Nevertheless, this position isn't applicable to every nation. It pertains to middle powers—regional players with established geopolitical utility in specific contexts—whose geographic location and political projection enable strategic maneuvers amid between rivalries between global actors¹.

The current phase of globalization's fragmentation has elevated the geopolitical statue of these countries. Supply chain reconfiguration, the dispersal of industrial hubs, and the shift of the global economic center toward Asia have all expanded their margin for action. These states now navigate spaces between major power spheres through sector-specific and tactical agreements.

The extent of this strategic leeway was made clear in their reactions to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Unlike the West, these countries did not prioritize imposing sanctions on Vladimir Putin. Instead, they exploited the crisis to their advantage. Turkey and India, in particular, exemplify this new power dynamic: Ankara has acted as a safe-conduct for Russian capital, India maintains some of the most extensive cross-sector business ties with Moscow, and Saudi Arabia has aligned with Russia through OPEC+ to calibrate oil prices and production volumes.

¹ Cuaderno de Estrategia 225. '*Potencias medias: Transitando hacia un orden multipolar*', Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos. <https://www.defensa.gob.es/ceseden/-/cuaderno-de-estrategia-225>

The economic dispersion of each of these nations serves as a gauge for monitoring the pace of multipolarity and its impact on power dynamics. The permeability of blocs allows for tactical agreements to be signed based on pragmatic leadership decisions—even among competing actors or rivals of their own allies.

These countries are uniquely positioned to capitalize on the strategic rivalry between Washington and Beijing—forging pragmatic bilateral ties with both without compromising either relationship. Saudi Arabia, India, and Turkey have clearly leveraged this approach to enhance their international visibility, while Indonesia, South Africa, and Brazil have adopted a similar stance shaped by their own geopolitical regional contexts.

Global power structures are shifting toward regionalization, where major powers increasingly act through regional intermediaries to advance their interests. The United States, for example, has showcased this in the Middle East by encouraging trilateral ties both with Israel and Saudi Arabia. Its aim to normalize relations between these two powers reflects a strategy to anchor its influence in the region. Such alliance would reinforce both actors and recalibrate the regional geopolitical balance in favor of Washington. Swing states countries are not aligned with major powers in a way that prevents them from leveraging emerging geopolitical dynamics. They exploit geo-economic flexibility to weave commercial and financial networks that strengthen their regional standing and elevate their international status. The current phase of deglobalization and asymmetric bipolarity—conducted by China and the United States—has expanded the diplomatic maneuvering space for these middle powers. This has translated into broader partner diversification, new channels of influence, and increased prominence within their respective regions.

The regionalized ecosystem emerging from this shift is multiplying strategic options for these nations. Already recognized as middle powers, they are now seizing opportunities that lay the groundwork for a more multipolar order. Each country has forged its own path—through diplomacy, infrastructure, or potential markets—to become a hub of influence. This fragmented regionalization explains the rise of new financial epicenters, strategic corridors, diplomatic deployment, and trade networks, all of which reshape the outline of the global geopolitical map.

India

In 2025, India became the world's fourth-largest economy, with a GDP of \$4.3 trillion, and it now stands as the most populous country on Earth². Its scale, geographic position, diplomatic network, demographic weight, and its growing technological and infrastructure base form the foundations for its emergence as a power with influence far beyond South Asia.

Nevertheless, New Delhi faces external threats and internal vulnerabilities. Tensions with neighboring Pakistan—both countries being nuclear-armed—along with its strategic rivalry with China over dominance in the Asia-Pacific, continue to constrain its foreign policy ambitions. Recent flare-ups in Kashmir are a reminder of the ever-present risk of conflict in the region.

India's international position cannot be described without its diplomatic architecture. New Delhi has carved out a unique position within the current global order. It maintains a long-standing and stable relationship with Russia, rooted in decades of cooperation; it upholds strong commercial and security ties with the United States; and despite ongoing strategic rivalry, it maintains significant trade relations with China—ties that are set to define the economic epicenter of the 21st century³.

India is also a founding member of the BRICS and one of the most prominent voices of the Global South—a concept gaining increasing relevance as a counterbalance to the Western-led order. Additionally, India is part of the QUAD (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue), an informal strategic alliance with Japan, Australia, and the United States, designed to promote a free and open Indo-Pacific.

²“El sorpasso económico de la India a una potencia histórica es ya una realidad”. El Economista, 16 de enero de 2025. Disponible en: <https://www.eleconomista.es/economia/noticias/13172310/01/25/el-sorpasso-economico-de-la-india-a-una-potencia-historica-es-ya-una-realidad-ahora-el-objetivo-es-alemania.html#:~:text=Este%20año%202025%20marca%20un,economía%20más%20grande%20del%20planeta.>

³ GLASER, John. Podcast host. “India, the swing state?”. Cato Institute. 11 de julio de 2023. Disponible en: <https://www.cato.org/multimedia/power-problems/india-swing-state>

Its participation in the QUAD ensures security and freedom in the face of China's expansionism in the region, while simultaneously provides India means to exert pressure on Washington amid its competition for control over the world's economic epicenter. India's strategic location, along with the credentials mentioned above, establishes it as the most influential among the swing states. The leeway at its disposal—combined with its visible potential—makes New Delhi a pivotal actor, capable of manage the balance of power through its capabilities.

Turkey

A nation that knows how to capitalizes its strategic geography under the leadership of its president. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has demonstrated an ability to engage effectively with global leaders and operate across multiple geopolitical arenas, consistently reaching advantages for Turkey.

Despite facing an economic crisis, Ankara has managed to position the country geopolitically with notable skill. Erdogan cosmovision developed a wide range, aiming to gain influence toward Europe, the Middle East, the Eastern Mediterranean, and Central Asia—demonstrating strategic ambition to emerge as an undeniable actor on the international stage. Its recent role in Syria following the collapse of Assad's regime is a clear example of this strategic optics.

Turkey is a member of NATO and hosts one of the Alliance's most important military bases on its territory. At the same time, it maintains pragmatic relations with Russia, facilitated by the personal rapport between the two countries' leaders.

Turkey is the one most engaged across multiple theaters—an advantage afforded by its unique geography. In each of these regions, Ankara has maneuvered to position itself advantageously and capitalize on ongoing dynamics. While the Middle East is undergoing a transition that increasingly centers on Saudi Arabia due to its Arab and religious identity, President Erdoğan still aspires to become a leading figure in the Muslim world—an ambition that has gained renewed intensity in the wake of recent events in Gaza. Turkey also looks eastward, toward Central Asia, where its alliance with an increasingly assertive

Azerbaijan serves as a channel for deeper influence in a resource-rich region with emerging strategic value.

Turkey's greatest weakness lies in its economic condition. While external supports its economy, this reality constrains the Eurasian nation's geopolitical ambitions. Erdoğan has optimized Turkish diplomacy and exploit in geopolitical terms specific industries – as UAV manufacturing –, yet the country's economic challenges place clear limits on its ambitions⁴.

From a power dynamics perspective, the Ankara has managed to reinforce its position in the international landscape through a strategic approach embedded in its efficient foreign policy. Beyond engaging on multiple geopolitical fronts, Turkey has built diplomatic, commercial, and industrial relationships with conflicting actors. Erdoğan's Turkey is a partner to all, but an ally to none⁵.

South Africa

A continental power, a consistent actor, and a consolidated state within Africa. As a member of the BRICS, South Africa holds a unique position—one that was rare in the region until last year, when Egypt and Ethiopia also joined the BRICS+ group.

The country's foreign policy is shaped by a strategy rooted in Africa, with the dual aim of fostering regional development and autonomy, while positioning itself more prominently on the global stage. South Africa emphasizes the importance of South-South cooperation, a principle that defines its role within the Global South. In parallel, its foreign agenda also projects to deepen commercial ties with the Global North, especially through strengthened relations with the European Union⁶.

⁴ FOROZISH, Ali Omar. "Turkey must adopt free markets to revitalize its faltering economy". Fair Observer. 17 de abril 2025. Disponible en: <https://www.fairobserver.com/world-news/turkey-must-adopt-free-markets-to-revitalize-its-faltering-economy/>

⁵ GONZÁLEZ, Ricard. "Erdoğan y los vaivenes de la política exterior turca". Política Exterior. 11 de mayo de 2023. Disponible en: <https://www.politicaexterna.com/erdogan-y-los-vaivenes-de-la-politica-externa-turca/>

⁶ MTHEMBI-MAHANYELE, Sankie. "La política exterior de Sudáfrica". Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos (IEEE). 10 de julio de 2024. Disponible en:

Africa holds a diverse range of natural resources, and South Africa is one of the most proactive actors in forging a national strategy alongside continental cooperation plans to ensure that these resources translate into development and autonomy for African nations. South Africa recognizes the strategic importance of key materials such as cobalt, coltan, uranium, and rare earth elements—all of which are central to the advancement of the Fourth Industrial Revolution⁷.

This awareness explains the escalating involvement of external powers—such as Turkey, the Gulf states, China, Russia, and members of the European Union—across the continent. But Africa’s appeal extends beyond its natural resource’s wealth. With a fast-growing and youthful population, the continent represents a future-oriented market with significant economic potential. These structural advantages have attracted foreign investment, particularly in infrastructure related to telecommunications, industrial development, and logistics.

South Africa has also asserted its credentials in security domain. The state deploys through regional African frameworks; it has adopted a proactive role in interceding in conflicts and promoting stability wherever possible, primarily via supranational institutions such as the African Union⁸.

South Africa seeks to become a catalyst for centers of power—industrial, logistical, commercial, financial, and cultural—across the continent, with the aspiration to see redrawn the global geopolitical balance in favor of Africa, thereby securing greater influence on the international agenda.

Among African nations, South Africa is one of the most strategically positioned. This advantage stems not only from its geographical location but also from its development as a nation, which it intends to further extend. Durban boasts one of Africa’s largest logistical ports, linked by a terrestrial corridor to the Copper Belt, which holds some of the

<https://www.defensa.gob.es/documents/2073105/2265109/La+política+exterior+de+Sudáfrica.pdf/a1dcc3aa-15f2-6289-bf09-b5bea5e15316?t=1732097350873>

⁷“Sudáfrica se posiciona para liderar la 4ª Revolución Industrial”. Video Euronews. 19 de septiembre 2019. Disponible en: <https://es.euronews.com/video/2019/09/10/la-version-africana-del-foro-economico-mundial-evoca-el-reto-de-la-4-revolucion-industrial>

⁸ AYBAR, Soraya. “La Unión Africana: ¿Todos a una?”. África Mundi. 27 de mayo de 2023. Disponible en: <https://www.africamundi.es/p/la-union-africana-una-union-por-tramos>

continent's most valuable mineral deposits, while Johannesburg functions as a key financial and technological hub for the region⁹.

South Africa's external influence is also reflected in its unique role as the only African member within the European Union's strategic partnerships¹⁰. The government seeks to deepen these ties through expanded multisector cooperation between the EU and the African Union, with a particular emphasis on security and energy. For South Africa, the emerge of protectionist dynamics propelled by the United States represent a threat on multiple levels, as they pose an obstacle to development within a multilateral framework that the South African nation aspired to shift international dynamics on Africa's benefit.

Its engagement with BRICS and the Global South underscores its effort to establish a counterweight that procures a more advantageous economic position for both South Africa and his continent.

Similarly, to how Brazil's stance on the Ukraine conflict is recognized, South Africa's approach to the Israel-Hamas conflict stands out, having played a prominent role in presenting claims before the International Court of Justice.

Indonesia

The nation is often overshadowed by its neighbors China and India, however, Indonesia's growth and strategic location affirm its emerging global significance. Located at the junction of the Pacific and Indian Ocean, it holds control over vital maritime chokepoints, specially the mayor value of the Strait of Malacca.

⁹ HERNANDO, Celia. "El mapa político de Sudáfrica". El Orden Mundial. 16 de agosto de 2024. Disponible en: <https://elordenmundial.com/mapas-y-graficos/mapa-politico-sudafrica/>

¹⁰ "La apuesta por Sudáfrica con inversión millonaria en medio de tensiones". France24. Podcast. 14 de marzo de 2025. <https://www.france24.com/es/programas/economía/20250314-ue-apuesta-por-sudáfrica-con-inversión-millonaria-en-medio-de-tensiones-comerciales-globales>

Its demographic scale of 277 million population is substantial. However, it is its emerging economy—ranked as the sixth-largest incipient market worldwide by GDP—that truly sets it apart, with growth in the last decade only outpaced by the continent's two giants¹¹.

Indonesia's significant regional advancement began under the leadership of Joko Widodo. Economic modernization and specific foreign policy have marked the country's course. Since gaining independence in 1945, Indonesia has historically avoided alignment with major blocs to preserve its strategic autonomy, following principles of neutrality and non-alignment¹². This approach, along with its steady economic growth, has solidified its influential role in the geopolitical landscape of Southeast Asia.

Indonesia is endowed with value natural resources, including oil, gas, and a diverse range of minerals, with its nickel reserves playing a capital role in the electric vehicle market. These factors, combined with social advancements and economic consolidation, along with its strategic position over vital maritime corridors, underpin Indonesia's potential as a regional power¹³.

On the political front, the 2024 elections brought Prabowo Subianto to power—a figure marked by controversy due to his military involvement in campaigns in East Timor and Papua. Nonetheless, he is aware with the regional power dynamics and the economic foundations that sustain Indonesia¹⁴.

The new president highlighted the importance of transforming Indonesia into a self-reliant nation, remarking Indonesia's particular foreign policy to avoid alliances that could restrict the scale and direction of its society.

The new leader also intends to foster investment in the military industry and the enhancement of the armed forces. These two priorities represent major challenges for the Subianto Administration, which must carefully navigate diplomatic equidistance by

¹¹LLANDRES CUESTA, Borja. "Indonesia, la emergencia de una potencia media con ambiciones globales". Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos (IEEE). 26 de noviembre de 2018. Disponible en: https://www.ieeee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_opinion/2018/DIEEEO121_2018BORLLA-Indonesia.pdf

¹²PERA, Javier. "Indonesia: la potencia silenciosa de Asia-Pacífico. LISA News. 9 de enero de 2025. Disponible en: <https://www.lisanews.org/geopolitica/indonesia-la-potencia-silenciosa-de-asia-pacifico/>

¹³ Factbook. CIA. Disponible en: <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/indonesia/locator-map/>

¹⁴ ORTIZ DE ZÁRATE ARCE, Roberto. "Prabowo Subianto". Barcelona Center for International Affairs (CIDOB). Disponible en: <https://www.cidob.org/lider-politico/prabowo-subianto>

maintaining security ties with Washington while simultaneously cultivating economic relationships with Beijing¹⁵.

Indonesia's leadership within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) reflects the country's geopolitical background in the region. In recent years, this leadership served as a spearhead to demonstrate Indonesia's potential role in the emerging of Global South¹⁶.

The environment of Global South countries is exemplified by Indonesia's struggles to gain access to markets like the United States through the new Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF), signed in 2022 under the previous U.S. administration. The framework aimed in one sense to counter the promoting economic links formed between Indonesia and China. Tensions with Washington also extend into the defense sphere, as reflected in Jakarta's refusal to join AUKUS — the security pact created in 2021 by the U.S., the U.K., and Australia. In this regard, Indonesia voiced criticism of the QUAD — the security dialogue between Japan, India, the U.S., and Australia — arguing it seeks to replace ASEAN's role in the Asian regional order. Through these stances, Indonesia reaffirmed its traditional non-aligned foreign policy stance and asserted itself as a sovereign actor with an independent international agenda.¹⁷.

Indonesia's relationship with China is of a different nature. The pragmatism of its elites and the convergence of mutual interests have shaped a trade architecture that benefits both countries, though it carries the risk of evolving into a dependency that could influence Jakarta's foreign policy. China is already Indonesia's top trading partner and stands as one of its main sources of investment—surpassed only by Singapore¹⁸.

Managing the influence that flows from Beijing's investments will be one of President

¹⁵ AMBRÓS, Isidre. "Indonesia, el gigante tranquilo del Indo-Pacífico reclama protagonismo". Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos (IEEE). 30 de mayo de 2024. Disponible en: https://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_opinion/2024/DIEEEO57_2024_ISIAMB_Indonesia.pdf

¹⁶ SHIDORE, Sarang. "The return of the global South". Foreign Affairs. 31 de agosto de 2023. Disponible en: https://www.foreignaffairs.com/world/return-global-south-critique-western-power?utm_medium=newsletters&utm_source=fatoday&utm_campaign=The%20Return%20of%20the%20Global%20South&utm_content=20230831&utm_term=FA%20Today%20-%2020112017

¹⁷ AMBRÓS, Isidre. "Indonesia, el gigante tranquilo del Indopacífico reclama protagonismo". Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos (IEEE). 30 de mayo de 2024. Disponible en: https://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_opinion/2024/DIEEEO57_2024_ISIAMB_Indonesia.pdf

¹⁸ NADA SHOFA, Jayanty. "The Foreign Investors who invested in Indonesia in 2024". 31 de diciembre de 2024. Disponible en: <https://jakartaglobe.id/business/the-foreign-investors-who-invested-in-indonesia-in-2024/>

Prabowo's key challenges. These financial ties are expected to shape not only Indonesia's economic policy but also the pace and direction of the industrial transformation he envisions to elevate the country's status to an economic actor to be considered.

China's strategic interest in Indonesia is closely tied to nickel¹⁹ — a vital resource for the rapidly growing electric vehicle industry. The People's Republic has already established a strong foothold, with Chinese companies exerting relevance control over the extraction and processing of this key mineral.

Nevertheless, this mutually beneficial relationship may come under strain if tensions escalate in Southeast Asia. Beijing's increasingly assertive posture in the region is widely viewed as a destabilizing factor. While China expands its economic footprint, countries across the region are becoming wary of the deeper dependencies such integration may bring — dependencies that could limit their strategic autonomy in the face of growing geopolitical uncertainty²⁰.

The nationalist profile of Prabowo Subianto is another factor that could disrupt the fluid relations between governments. However, his experience within Indonesia's power elite makes him aware of the vulnerabilities that need to be addressed, as well as the strategic assets he can leverage to bolster his position. His amicable ties with the United States could provide a tactical counterbalance to apply pressure on China and secure specific concessions, though this is unlikely to extend to structurally and strategic basis²¹.

Indonesia occupies a pivot position, able to pivot its relationships between global titans and establish itself as a strategic player on the international theatre. Through ASEAN and other regional platforms, it can assert its geopolitical credentials in Southeast Asia. Located at the core of the economic center of gravity of the globe, Indonesia knows how to capitalized his presence within the regional ecosystem. Nonetheless, much of its

¹⁹ LOTULUNG, Garry. "El negocio de las minas de níquel en Indonesia: contratos millonarios y playas contaminadas". El País, 22 de abril de 2024. Disponible en: <https://elpais.com/planeta-futuro/2024-04-21/el-negocio-de-las-minas-de-niquel-en-indonesia-contratos-millonarios-y-playas-contaminadas.html>

²⁰ SANJAYA, Trystanto. "Why Indonesia must reduce its economic dependence on China". Modern Diplomacy. 13 de mayo de 2022. Disponible en: <https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2022/05/13/why-and-how-indonesia-must-reduce-its-economic-dependence-on-china/>

²¹ "How Subianto is making his mark on Indonesia Politics". Stratfor. 27 de mayo de 2025. Disponible en: <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/how-subianto-making-his-mark-indonesian-politics>

regional weight will be measured by its ability to maintain geopolitical equidistance in its relations with both regional and global actors.

Brazil

Brazil, a founding member of the BRICS and a major South American power, still faces major structural deficiencies — in transport infrastructure, sanitation, environmental management, and also in institutional robustness, education, and investment attraction²².

A key characteristic that sets this Latin American country apart is the variability of its political direction, which shifts profoundly depend on the ideology of its government. With Lula da Silva's return to power, Brazil has reestablished itself as a proactive player on the international stage, advocating for changes more in line with the interests of the Global South and non-aligned nations. Its position on the war in Ukraine clearly reflects the current government's foreign policy stance. This approach contrasts sharply with the previous administration under Jair Bolsonaro, illustrating how Brazil's foreign policy can change significantly with different leadership.

The government changes lead to significant shifts in national policy and hinder the establishment of a consistent and stable geopolitical identity. Nevertheless, it remains the best-positioned South American country in geopolitical terms, due to its vast biodiversity, territorial scale, and its role as an economic and financial engine for Latin America²³.

This strengthens Brazil's regional leadership—especially with Argentina's current political course—positioning it as the leading South American power capable of promoting the foundations of an alternative global order. This moment is geopolitically relevant, placing Brasília at the core of South America's visible power structure and giving it the potential to serve as a connector between regional interests and global reconfigurations of the

²² "La salida de Brasil: soluciones estructurales e inserción en el mercado internacional". LlorenteyCuenca. Abril 2025. Disponible en: https://ideas.llorenteycuenca.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2015/04/150417_DI_informe_especial_salida_Brasil_ESP.pdf

²³ FAURIOL, Georges A, SCOTT B, Macdonald. "Of the Global South, Brazilian aspirations and U.S. interest". Diplomatic Courier. July 22, 2024. <https://www.diplomaticcourier.com/posts/global-south-brazilian-aspirations-u-s-interest>

international system.

Brazil's distinctive role in championing alternative geopolitical initiatives—such as the BRICS and the Global South—grants it a strategic platform to expand its influence and become a logistic hub in large-scale projects seeking to incorporate South America into emerging economic international organigram. The Bi-Oceanic Corridor, intended to provide Brazil with access to the Pacific Ocean, is a revealing expression of the country's commercial projection toward Asia²⁴. While Brazil maintains significant economic ties with traditional partners like Argentina and the United States, China has become its top trading partner—an indicator of the shifting priorities and strategic direction of the South American power²⁵.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia asserts its position on the international chessboard beyond its traditional role as a hydrocarbon exporter. The revenues from these exports have allowed the Kingdom to develop a consistent network of diverse and powerful allies alongside with a constellation of partners, enabling it to access to emerging markets. Nevertheless, the kingdom's major challenge lies within its own borders: with a population of 33 million—most of whom are under thirty—it faces the critical undertaking of providing social and economic opportunities for its young demographic mass. Mohamed bin Salman (MBS) challenge is established a nation that can balance its traditional foundations with the innovative future that he promotes internationally as the country's defining vision²⁶.

Saudi Arabia is a key ally of the United States in Middle East. However, this bond did not prevent the Kingdom from negotiating oil production agreements with Russia to mutually adjust prices; move that negatively impacted Washington and the Western bloc²⁷. At the

²⁴ TOBIN, Meaghan, "Las empresas chinas ponen la mira en Brasil". The New York Times. 20 de junio de 2025. Disponible en: <https://www.nytimes.com/es/2025/06/20/espanol/negocios/empresas-chinas-brasil.html>

²⁵ "Main trade partners of Brasil in 2024, by value of exports and imports". Statista. 4 de marzo de 2025. Disponible en: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1337836/brazil-main-trade-partner-countries-by-exports-imports/>

²⁶ Arabia Saudita: Economía y demografía. Expansión. Disponible en: <https://datosmacro.expansion.com/paises/arabia-saudita>

²⁷ VIDAL, Albert. "Arabia Saudí ya no tiene miedo de desafiar a Estados Unidos". El Orden Mundial. 6 de agosto de 2023. Disponible en: <https://elordenmundial.com/arabia-saudi-no-tiene-miedo-desafiar-estados-unidos-petroleo/>

same time, Saudi Arabia has developed commercial ties with China through agreements that are expected to increase in scale, showcasing political flexibility that reinforces its position as a regional power aiming to upgrade its credentials in the international stadium. The synergy between Riyadh — one of the largest hydrocarbon producers — and Beijing — its biggest consumer — reinforces the position of both and solidifies their foundations to ensure the continuity of their respective ambitions.

In the Middle East, Saudi Arabia has demonstrated diplomatic adaptability in navigating the region's turbulent landscape. Though it did not sign the Abraham Accords in 2021, it allowed to maintain diverse unofficial channels with Israel over the years. It has also reactivated diplomatic ties with Iran²⁸, a regional rival, with China playing a decisive role in encouraging this rapprochement. These moves demonstrate Riyadh's pragmatic approach to reaffirming its regional stance.

Saudi Arabia's ambition to reposition itself in Asian and European markets reflects its strategy to diversify away from a hydrocarbon-dependent economy. The kingdom aims to leverage its financial power to enter emerging markets and upgrade its status within the global elite. This geopolitical standpoint, which balances engagement with both East and West, attracts investors who recognize the country's potential. Additionally, Saudi Arabia continues to focus on Africa, valuing its mineral wealth and agricultural opportunities, which are imperative to the kingdom's long-term foundation.

Riyadh has implemented Vision 2030²⁹, a broad multisector project aimed at diversifying Saudi Arabia's economy and establishing the Kingdom as a global hub across multiple dimensions: tourism, technology, finance, religion, economy, and diplomacy. On the regional latitude, it faces competition from Dubai as a financial capital—an effort that has elevated the UAE to a prominent position in the sector. Likewise, Qatar remains a proactive diplomatic player, presenting additional challenges due to differing geopolitical agendas on various Middle Eastern affairs. Nevertheless, the UAE lacks the scale and

²⁸ NUÑEZ VILLAVARDE, Jesús. "Arabia Saudí e Irán se acercan, con China como Factótum". Real Instituto Elcano. 14 de marzo de 2023. Disponible en: <https://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/comentarios/arabia-saudi-e-iran-se-acercan-con-china-como-factotum/>

²⁹ TORREGROSA RAMOS, Natalia. "La visión 2030 en Arabia Saudí". IEEE. 29 de marzo de 2023. https://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_analisis/2023/DIEEEA24_2023_NATTOR_Arabia.pdf

resource depth that Saudi Arabia possesses.

The Desert Kingdom also leverages its energy markets as a capital asset and guarantee to support the diversification of its economy on an unmatched scale within Middle East³⁰. ARAMCO is the national flagship company and one of the world's most valuable corporation, which acts as a driving force that draws investment across a range of strategic sectors in the world's most selective markets³¹.

BRICS, Global South and an a more inclusive order

The official establishment of BRICS showcased the desire to create an alternative model for economic and political cooperation. With the recent expansion to include emerging nations such as the United Arab Emirates, Ethiopia, Egypt, Iran, and Indonesia, these aspirations for change have grown both in scale and impact. Collectively, these countries represent 27% of the world's GDP, 16% of global exports of goods and services, 40% of the global population, and cover 32% of the Earth's land area across four continents³².

The BRICS represent one of the most resonant institutional body, led by China and Russia, whose mindset does not accommodate any centers of power other than their own. This poses an obstacle for other nations such as swing states, which aspire to a more equitable international order conferring them decision-making power within a system of different balances. Consequently, the geopolitical agenda of the BRICS does not converge with these rmedium forces, which advocate for diplomatic flexibility in a more equitable system of decision-making. Currently, Global South remains largely a conceptual narrative without formal institutionalization, appealing particularly in southern regions but absence of concrete structural presence.

³⁰ "Arabia Saudí apuesta en 2025 por la diversificación económica, la expansión del turismo y un compromiso firme con la sostenibilidad". FORBES. 31 de enero de 2025. Disponible en: <https://forbes.es/actualidad/605381/arabia-saudi-apuesta-en-2025-por-la-diversificacion-economica-la-expansion-del-turismo-y-un-compromiso-firme-con-la-sostenibilidad/>

³¹ Ibid

³² FLORENCIA MELO, María. "El peso mundial de los nuevos BRICS". Statista. Disponible en: <https://es.statista.com/grafico/33305/aporte-de-los-brics-al-pib-mundial-poblacion-produccion-de-petroleo-y-exportaciones-de-bienes/>

Within this scenario, *swing states* have a unique opportunity to leverage their emerging resonance and narrative appeal, with the potential to forge a distinct geopolitical identity. Nevertheless, there is the risk of being absorbed by the BRICS, an established institutional entity that is unlikely to relinquish the advantages offered by the Global South concept and its associated markets. That being said, this scenario also presents an opportunity for swing states: as regional powers with geopolitical awareness but without the hegemonic dominance—and resultant mistrust—associated with giants like China and Russia, they are favourably located to promote cooperation among middle powers.

CONCLUSION

The geopolitical asset seized by countries such as India and Indonesia, as well as Saudi Arabia and Turkey—due to their geographical location between East and West—strengthens their capacity to expand their strategic value and validate their international upgrade within the emerging alternative world order. South Africa and Brazil are more peripheral players on the global stadium but still maintains a unique strategic value within their regions, acting as pivotal assets by developing sector-specific relationships with diverse global powers. Despite their regional status, *swing states* have cultivated their own global geopolitical mindset, optimizing from the flexibility granted by major powers without being restricted into rigid blocs, which allows them to expand their business models and diplomatic expertise.

The flexibility implemented into strategic agendas, along with the dynamism of markets, has recalibrated the model and scale of influence exerted. Regionalization has not only brought a shift in terms of industrial power centers and supply chains but also redefined the nomenclature of power: geopolitics now encompasses several spheres where each of these countries has discovered an opportunity to exhibit their credentials as proactive and decisive actors to encounter the challenges within their regions.

Swing states are the hinges of the emerging system. Their ability to demonstrate their role as indispensable actors will cement their status in the international stage. Their functionality as financial hubs, logistical nodes, diplomatic champions, or industrial centers will define the strategic value of their geopolitical foundation.

The centers of political power are located in the United States and China, but they will increasingly be influenced by distant high-value regions, which serve as financial hubs, ports, industrial bases, and repositories of critical natural resources. This trend diminishes the direct influence of the giants and empowers regional actors with better access. However, the fragmentation of the system has revealed economic maps that differ from political alliances, and emphasis the disruptive nature of the transition toward multipolarity. The international order confronts fractures within its own framework.

The paradigm originally designed to stimulate joint development through cooperation and economic balance has instead entrenched economic interdependence, whose contradictions fuel instability and encourage the pursuit of alternatives. The consolidated centers of power will retain their preponderance, nevertheless, they will increasingly rely on commercial, energy, financial, and technological axis unfold across multiple geographic latitudes. Within this framework, Saudi Arabia, India, South Africa, Turkey, Indonesia, and Brazil have leveraged their strategic location, diplomatic prowess, and infrastructure expansion to forge its own centrality and capitalize the emerge conditions from the evolving global order.

Currently, no nation enjoys absolute autonomy, especially since the sources not only of their power but also of their support are dispersed across multiple directions, which amplify dependencies and multiply vulnerabilities. This marks a reorientation in the balance of forces, where countries, groups, and corporations—regardless of size—possess the capacity to destabilize the system and turn volatility an inherent feature.

*Jacobo Morillo Llovo**

Geopolitical and Intelligence analyst at JoseParejo&Associates

[@JacMor14](#)