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By Sergio Rodriguez Gelfenstein (guest author)

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## ‘Wuthering Heights’ at four summits

A Venezuelan international relations expert, Rodriguez Gelfenstein was previously Director of the International Relations of the Presidency of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, his country’s ambassador to Nicaragua and an adviser for international politics for TeleSUR. X: @sergioro0701 Translation: John Catalinotto.

The title of this article alludes to an extraordinary novel written by Emily Brontë in the middle of the 19th century and which, on many occasions, has been adapted for film and television. I saw the 1992 version directed by Peter Kosminsky.

The title of the novel came to mind when I set out to reflect on the outcome of a series of meetings held recently this year that have created a veritable storm regarding the existence and functioning of the international system. These are the summits of the BRICS [Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa] group held in South Africa in August, those of the G20 in India and of the G77+China in Cuba in September.

And I would add the Far East Economic Forum, held in the Russian city of Vladivostok during the same month. Within less than two months, the foundations of the Atlantist and Eurocentric international system have been shaken.

The 2023 annual meeting of the BRICS group definitively broke the media obscurantism that accompanied these sessions. It was no longer possible to conceal from the world an association of five states — to which about 40 countries of the so-called “Global South” wish to join — in view of the overwhelming advance of this grouping that has been gaining strength as a counterweight to the Western financial and political order.

At this moment (before the incorporation of six new countries on Jan. 1, 2024), the BRICS already represents 41% of the global population, 31.5% of the gross domestic product (GDP) and 16% of world trade. This has allowed them to set an agenda different from that

of the West, as evidenced by their support for Russia in confronting the sanctions of the United States and the European Union.

### **A challenge to the West**

The great demand that exists today to join the bloc is a demonstration of the influence of this new geopolitical force that has the potential to challenge the Western-led system. A force that would be led by the second world power, China, which together with Russia hopes to lead the international community towards a more just, equitable and participatory world.

China's President Xi Jinping said it when he said goodbye to his Russian counterpart at the end of his state visit to that country in March: "Changes are taking place that we have not seen in a hundred years and we are the ones who are leading it together."

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi reiterated this last Monday, Sept. 18, at the beginning of his visit in Moscow: "We are ready to work together with Russia for the formation of a multipolar world and a fairer world order." These statements leave no room for doubt as to what the ultimate goal is.

Only a few days after the Johannesburg meeting, the G20 summit in New Delhi, took place in the second week of September with great success for India. Contrary to Western interests, the conclave avoided "Ukrainizing" the meeting. The final declaration, adopted by consensus, addressed other issues of global interest such as food, climate and energy, the need to reform international financial institutions, digital transformation and macroeconomic policy.

Worth noting was the acceptance of the importance of the development goals that the Global South defined as strategic, especially in relation to the strengthening of the role that developing countries must play in the global economic sphere and the need for developed countries to fulfill the agreed financial obligations that establish the need to allocate \$100 billion annually to fight climate change. The inclusion of the African Union in the G20 as a permanent member was a historic decision.

Russia and other countries that have fought to depoliticize the debates in this instance in order to have the capacity to respond to these problems faced by the majority of the world's population, succeeded in paralyzing Western attempts to transform the event into a discussion on the situation in Ukraine.

The conclave accurately established that there is a multiplicity of armed conflicts on the planet, calling for their peaceful settlement through dialogue and diplomatic efforts on the

basis of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations in its entirety. Once again the failure of the United States and its allies was glaring.

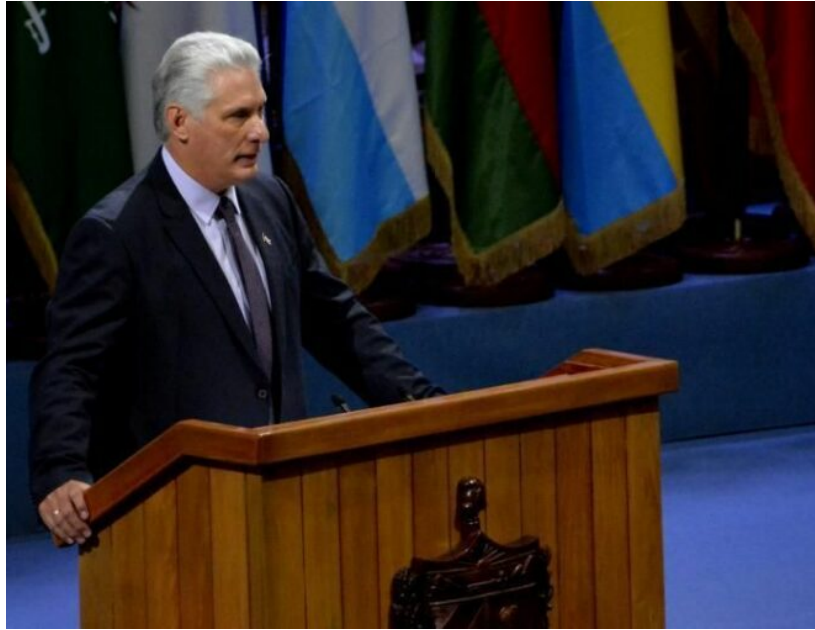
On the other hand, during the same month, the Eastern Economic Forum was held in the city of Vladivostok, located in the far east of Russia. This space is “a key international platform for creating and strengthening ties between the Russian and global investment communities, as well as for carrying out a comprehensive assessment of the economic potential of the Russian Far East.”

About 7,000 representatives from more than 50 countries took part in it. According to the RT portal last year, documents worth almost \$34 billion were signed at the event, including agreements on infrastructure and transport projects, development of large deposits, as well as in the construction, industry and agriculture sectors.

Trade exchange between Russia and the countries of the Asia-Pacific region grew by 13.7% last year, while during the first six months of this year it increased by another 18.3%. During his speech at the conclave, Russian President Vladimir Putin clearly stated that the development of the Russian Far East is a “strategic priority for the entire 21st century.” This event and the signed agreements expose a lie to the idea publicized by the transnational disinformation media that speak of Russia’s “isolation” and the crisis of its economy.

Putin externalized the idea that “a new model of cooperation” was being born on a global level that is not based on Western patterns, explaining that these changes are produced due to “the destruction of the financial system” by the West. This has led — according to the Russian president — to more and more countries showing their willingness to cooperate under the new model.

**President of Cuba speaks**



**Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel at Group of 77 and China summit in Havana, Cuba, in mid-September 2023.**

Finally, also during this month, the summit of the G77+China was held in Cuba. This is a grouping of 134 countries from Asia, Africa and America, which represent 80% of the world population and two-thirds of the members of the U.N.

This event has been considered a meeting of the countries of the South that have been beaten and mistreated by the unjust international system hegemonized by the West. It was especially important that the meeting was held in Cuba, a country that for more than 60 years has been blockaded and multi-sanctioned by the United States.

At this summit, the policies of blockade, injustice, colonialism, impoverishment, sanctions, marginalization, exploitation and racism these peoples have suffered in various forms were persistently denounced.

Contrary to what the transnational media of disinformation transmits, the summit made it clear that it is the United States, Europe — and what they have called their “International Community” — that are isolated from the majority of humanity that seeks other paths and points out other routes on the road to defend the values of justice and wellbeing.

The event emphasized the need to build a different approach to deal with the fundamental elements of scientific, cognitive and technological development, so that in this way humanity can advance and attain “an additional bonus, through justice and equality of conditions and can eliminate, once and for all, arrogance, discrimination, hegemony and the wars imposed by the North.”

Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel continued at the meeting in the same sense, saying: “We are not poor countries but impoverished and deprived of technology and science so that we remain marginal and make it easier for the countries of the North to plunder our human resources and wealth.”

As president of the Group of 77, Díaz-Canel called for the construction of a fair and sustainable global order that would allow most of these countries to emerge from the crises that have been imposed on them. To this end, he proposed focusing in a participatory and collective manner on the development of scientific resources, innovation and the strengthening of scientific and cognitive capacities to achieve sustainable development.

In his address to the event, U.N. Secretary General António Guterres, in a surprise move, joined the global outcry by stating that it is essential to change both the international order and its institutions, created after World War II, so that they “reflect current realities.”

Guterres added: “We need global action (...) to build an international system that upholds human rights and works in their interests at all levels. And that requires the G77+China to use their voice to fight for a world that works for all.”

Contrary to his traditional stance, Guterres assured that the fundamental objective should be to build “strong and effective multilateral institutions,” since many of them, especially the U.N. Security Council and those created from the Bretton Woods agreements, “reflect a bygone era” and not the current one.

It seemed incredible, but Portuguese diplomat Guterres firmly expressed that: “The voice of the G77+China will always be essential in the United Nations. And I am counting on this group, which has long been an advocate of multilateralism, to step forward, use its power and fight.”

Thus, seen as a whole, the summit meetings of the last two months have shown a humanity that seems to chart a different course from the one it has had to live in during the last 80 years, marked by domination, imposition, blackmail and the permanent threat posed by the Atlanticist hegemony of the United States and Europe.

*Translator’s note: The Spanish title of Brontë’s novel, “Cumbres borrascosas,” can also be translated as “Stormy Summits.”*

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