

Pepe Escobar: The Three Key Messages From St. Petersburg to the Global Majority

By Pepe Escobar - Sputnik, June , 2024

In the year of the Russian presidency of BRICS, the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF) had to deliver something special.

And deliver it did: over 21,000 people representing no less than 139 nations – a true microcosm of the Global Majority, discussing every facet of the drive towards a multipolar, *multinodal* (italics mine), polycentric world.

St. Petersburg, beyond all the networking and the frantic deal-making – \$78 billion-worth clinched in only three days – crafted three intertwined key messages already resonating all across the Global Majority.

Message Number One:

President Putin, a “European Russian” and true son of this dazzling, dynamic historic marvel by the Neva, delivered an extremely detailed one-hour speech on the Russian economy at the forum’s plenary session.

The key takeaway: as the collective West launched total economic war against Russia, the civilization-state turned it around and positioned itself as the world’s 4th largest economy by purchasing power parity (PPP).

Putin showed how Russia still carries the potential to launch no less than nine sweeping – global – structural changes, an all-out drive involving the federal, regional, and municipal spheres.

Everything is in play – from global trade and the labor market to digital platforms, modern technologies, strengthening small and medium-sized businesses and exploring the still untapped, phenomenal potential of Russia’s regions.

What was made perfectly clear is how Russia managed to reposition itself beyond sidestepping the – illegitimate – sanctions tsunami to establishing a solid, diversified system oriented towards global trade – and completely linked to the expansion of BRICS. Russia-friendly states already account for three-quarters of Moscow’s trade turnover.

Putin’s emphasis on the Global Majority’s accelerated drive to strengthen sovereignty was directly linked to the collective West doing its best – rather, worst – to undermine trust in their own payment infrastructure.

And that leads us to...

Glazyev and Dilma rock the boat.

Message Number Two:

That was arguably the major breakthrough in St. Petersburg. Putin stated how the BRICS are working on their own payment infrastructure, independent from pressure/sanctions by the collective West.

Putin had a special meeting with Dilma Rousseff, president of the BRICS New Development Bank (NDB). They did talk in detail about the bank's development – and most of all, as later confirmed by Rousseff, about The Unit, whose lineaments were first revealed exclusively by Sputnik: an apolitical, transactional form of cross-border payments, anchored in gold (40%) and BRICS+ currencies (60%).

The day after meeting Putin, president Dilma had an even more crucial meeting at 10 am in a private room at SPIEF with Sergey Glazyev, the Minister for Macro-Economy at the Eurasia Economic Union (EAEU) and member of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

Glazyev, who had previously provided full academic backing to the Unit concept, explained all the details to President Dilma. They were both extremely pleased with the meeting. A beaming Rousseff revealed that she had already discussed The Unit with Putin. It was agreed there will be a special conference at the NDB in Shanghai on The Unit in September.

This means the new payment system has every chance to be at the table during the BRICS summit in October in Kazan, and be adopted by the current BRICS 10 and the near future, expanded BRICS+.

Now to...

Message Number Three:

It had to be, of course, about BRICS – which everyone, Putin included, stressed will be significantly expanded. The quality of the BRICS-related sessions in St. Petersburg demonstrated how the Global Majority is now facing a unique historical juncture – with a real possibility for the first time in the last 250 years to go all-out for a structural change of the world-system.

And it's not only about BRICS.

It was confirmed in St. Petersburg that no less than 59 nations – and counting – plan to join not only BRICS but also the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Eurasia Economic Union (EAEU).

No wonder: these multilateral organizations now finally have established themselves on the forefront of the drive towards the *multimodal* (italics mine) – and to quote Putin in his address – “harmonic multipolar world”.

The Top Sessions for Further Reference

All of the above could be followed, live, during the frantic two and a half days of forum's sessions. This is a sample of what were arguably the most engaging. The broadcasts should be very helpful as references going forward – all the way to the BRICS summit in October, and beyond.

On the Northern Sea Route (NSR) and Arctic expansion. Best motto of the session: “We need icebreakers!” The essential discussion to understand how the current global trade supply chains are not reliable anymore and how the NSR is faster, cheaper and reliable.

On the BRICS business expansion.

On the BRICS goals for a true new world order.

On the 10 years of the EAEU.

On the closer integration between EAEU and ASEAN.

The BRICS+ roundtable on the International North South Transportation Corridor (INSTC).

This session was particularly crucial. The key actors of the INSTC are Russia, Iran and India – all BRICS members. Actors on the margins which will profit from the INSTC – from the Caucasus to Central and South Asia – are already interested to be part of BRICS+. Igor Levitin, a top Putin advisor, was a key figure in this session.

The Greater Eurasia Partnership (GEP).

This was an essential discussion on what is eminently a civilizational project – in contrast with the collective West's exclusionary approach. The discussion shows how GEP interlinks with SCO, EAEU and ASEAN and stresses the inevitable complementarity of transport, logistics, energy and payment structure all across Eurasia. Glazyev, Deputy Prime Minister Alexey Overchuk and former Austrian Foreign Minister Karin Kneissl – always ultra-sharp – are key participants. Extra – astonishing – bonus: Adul Umari, acting Minister of Labor in Taliban Afghanistan, interacting with his Eurasia partners.

On the philosophy of multipolarity.

Conceptually, this session interacts with the GEP session. It offers the perspective of a concise inter-civilizational dialogue under the framework of BRICS+. Alexander Dugin, the irrepressible Maria Zakharova and Professor Zhang Weiwei of Fudan University are among the participants.

On Polycentricity. That involves all Global Majority institutions: BRICS, SCO, EAEU, CIS, CSTO, CICA, African Union, the renewed Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). Glazyev, Maria Zakharova, Senator Pushkov and Alexey Maslov – director of the Institute of Asian and African Studies at Moscow State University – discuss how to build a polycentric system of international relations.

As Project Ukraine Faces Doom

Finally, it's inevitable to contrast the – hopeful, auspicious – mood at SPIEF with the collective West's hysterics as Project Ukraine faces doom. Putin made it quite clear: Russia will prevail, no matter what. The collective West may rekindle “the Istanbul solution”, as Putin noted, but modified “based upon the new reality” in the battlefield.

Putin also deftly defused all the pre-fabricated, nonsensical nuclear paranoia infesting Atlanticist circles.

Still, that won't be enough. On the packed corridors at SPIEF, and in informal meetings, there was total awareness about the Hegemon's desperation-fueled warmongering masked as “defense.” There were no illusions that the current dementia posing as “foreign policy” is betting on a genocide not only for the sake of the “aircraft carrier” in West Asia but mostly to cow the Global Majority into submission.

That would raise the serious possibility that the Global Majority needs to build a military alliance to deter this – planned – Global War.

Russia-China, of course, plus Iran and credible Arab deterrence – with Yemen showing the way: all of that may become a must. A Global Majority military alliance will have to show up one way or another: either before the – incoming, planned – disaster, to mitigate it; or after it has totally engulfed West Asia into a monstrous, vicious war.

Ominously, we may be nearly there. But at least St. Petersburg offered glimmers of hope. Putin: “Russia will be the heart of the multipolar harmonic world.” Now *that's* how you clinch a one-hour speech.