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Expert Opinion

The emerging new reality is not pre-determined. Many systems of this world order have lost equilibrium and stability. Given the eroding balance and increasing chaos, new checks and balances systems are being born. But no one knows what will the new world look like. Each player makes his move based on the current circumstances, threats and own interests, without any clear vision of the future. Any forecast of the future during chaos is as difficult as possible, that's why expert views could be very far apart. We have asked Ivan Timofeyev, General Director of the Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC), about his views on some of the current processes.

Ivan Nikolayevich, the anti-Russian sanctions policy of the West has led to Russia strengthening its ties and business partnerships with China, India, Turkey, Iran, Arab and African countries. The weight of these countries on the global arena is different, but everyone has to actively maneuver to avoid secondary sanctions on cooperation with us. Could you please provide a few most interesting cases of how the players of these sophisticated games get away with it?

The ways that companies use to adjust themselves to risks is their business secret. What matters here is availability of reliable payment arrangements, financial settlements, and as a rule, the issue here is not so much about bypassing sanctions, but about operating outside of the jurisdiction of Western countries. Leaving their jurisdiction, consequently, does not remove secondary sanction risks, but at least takes away criminal and administrative persecution risks.

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The BRICS causes controversial emotions with Russian experts. Some in the community refuse to believe in any prospects for this amorphous entity, pointing out that this block brings together countries which have no common political and economic interests. Others believe that there is a bright future ahead for this organization, because it includes both resource suppliers and resource users, which is a good foundation for a mutually beneficial economic partnership … What is your view of the BRICS prospects?

The BRICS, on the one hand, is a union (not even an institution): it does not have a secretariat or executive bodies. Essentially, it is a club. This is its key strength: it is not burdened by any red tape. On the other hand, implementation of resolutions, recommendations of the BRICS summits effectively requires efforts at the level of national government and is not controlled by any supranational structure. Indeed, the BRICS has a very broad agenda, a lot of multiple questions, starting with environmental protection and ending with finances, power industry. At the same time positions of individual member countries (importers, exporters of resources) differ. In any case, it is good that there is this forum in place, and every player could try and play its own game at this forum.

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How successful are Western countries in weaning themselves off of the dependence on our resources?

Western countries have seen their costs climb due to the ban on Russian oil and oil products. They are forced to buy these commodities from other suppliers. Overall, they are getting by. I do not see any excessive shortages, but the costs are higher. This is especially true for Europe.

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