**FROM "BRITS" TO BRICS**

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*Many countries have given their people identifying names. New Zealanders call themselves "Kiwis" while the Australians like to be called "Aussies." And the British? Well they have a stoic name for themselves. They call themselves, "Brits." It carries a certain solid, reliable ring to it.*

More and more, the place of the "Brits" on the world stage is being challenged by more lively, rising economies not so much weighed down by the burdens of social welfare costs, massive debt and aging infrastructure. These emerging nations are able to move boldly into markets that the Western world has dominated for more than a century. They compete by utilising cheap labour, and as technology and education levels rise they are well equipped to press their advantage.

On China's Hainan Island, a meeting was held recently by the leading nations involved in this global shift of power. China, the world's rising heavyweight contender, invited other "would-be" greats to the meetings, giving rise to a new name that you will hear more often in the future. The players are *B*razil, *R*ussia, *I*ndia, *C*hina and*S*outh Africa (collectively known as BRICS).

The "BRICS" are home to 3 billion people, 40 percent of the global population. China has already become the world's largest exporter, by spending heavily on imported raw materials, especially oil. China's voracious appetite for trade has also pushed Russia to become a major exporter of manufactured goods. Brazil, meanwhile, is selling unprecedented quantities of iron ore to China for use in steel mills.

**GLOBAL SHIFT IN WEALTH AND POWER**

A hundred years ago, China was coming to the end of its dynastic era, Russia was still ruled by the Romanovs, and India was under British rule. Brazil in 1911 was a little-known South American country and South Africa was a place for British and American industrialists to mine gold and diamonds. Great Britain in 1911 still controlled more than 50 percent of the world's shipping and the Royal Navy "ruled the waves."

A century ago, the United States, fresh from adventures in the Philippines and Panama, was rising to world power status—a status that would be confirmed after World War II. By that time, Great Britain had become the world's largest debtor nation and the U.S. the greatest creditor nation. Britain had benefited to the tune of some $26 billion from the U.S. Lend-Lease "arms-on-credit" scheme. In addition, Britain took the largest share of Marshall Plan aid of any European country.

But American aid came with strings attached. To receive a 1945 American loan of $3.7 billion at 2 percent interest, Britain was forced to end the "Imperial Preference System" whereby more than 50 percent of international payments were made in pounds sterling. Henceforward, the U.S. dollar would become the world currency exchange standard.

The terms of the deal caused outrage and resentment in Parliament. The *Economist* magazine scathingly wrote, "It is aggravating to find that our reward for losing a quarter of our national wealth is to pay tribute for half a century to those who have been enriched by the war" (*Reluctant Europeans*, Gowland and Turner, pp. 14–18).

The reluctant British accepted a loss of prestige and power to their little brother. Historian Niall Ferguson points out that American war aims were *"in many ways more overtly hostile to the British Empire than anything Hitler had ever said"* (*Empire*, p. 344). Small surprise then that, as a condition of continuing U.S. aid, the Colonial Office over the next 20 years would divest itself, often with unseemly haste, of the last vestiges of the greatest empire the world had ever known. America would never *overtly* take up the mantle of imperial greatness. Rather, it would exercise economic imperialism in the world, with giant U.S. companies dominating world trade.

All of this has arguably come to an end as the U.S. is now where Great Britain was after World War II—the world's largest debtor nation, just as Great Britain was 65 years ago. The BRICS know it, and are eager to assume greater power over economic events. But will they? Will the U.S. receive its comeuppance, even as Britain did after World War II?

We are now experiencing a massive global power shift of seismic proportions. It is a time when a reckoning of the financial accounts of nations occurs. The grandeur of empires, or pseudo-empires, counts for nothing when their coffers are emptied. Spain lost its imperial reach when its source of gold and silver from South America was no longer available. The French were the losers once British imperialism asserted itself after the Napoleonic wars. Even in recent times, Japanese economic clout has waned while China has captured many of its markets.

**WHO WILL RULE THE HEAP?**

The BRICS countries see themselves as the inheritors of a new world order. But relations between the club members have not always been as rosy as they may appear, while they vie for the same scarce resources. India and China have viewed each other with jaundiced eye for many years, and in 1969 a hot flare-up between Russia and China occurred.

One world power that is watching events closely is the European Union—and, in particular, its economic engine, Germany.

Bible prophecy gives us an insight into where the world's wealth and power will ultimately reside. Those who have been following *Tomorrow's World's*clear insight into the world that is coming will understand that a revitalised "Babylonian" system is forming in Europe. It is not only rising up as a contender to American hegemony, but indeed will come, for a short time, to dominate the whole world. The book of Revelation gives us a unique perspective on the years ahead.

In Revelation 17 we are introduced to a woman who rides a scarlet beast. This is biblical symbolism for a church controlling a government (Our free booklet, *The Beast of Revelation,*will give you a fuller understanding of these symbols). This government can be identified with a unified Europe that will ultimately take control of the world's monetary system and dominate international trade.

We read an account of the time when this whole European-controlled system collapses, "And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore'" ([Revelation 18:11](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Rev%2018.11)). Then, completing the picture, '"For in one hour such great riches came to nothing.' Every shipmaster, all who travel by ship, sailors, and as many as trade on the sea, stood at a distance" (v. 17).

The picture is clear. The world's economic order is in the process of realignment; it will **not** be controlled by the BRICS, but rather by a rising European power. After 200 years of Anglo-American domination, it will be Europe—not an Asian/South American/African bloc—that will rise and for a time take control of the world's wealth.

The good news is that before all this is done, Jesus Christ will return as King of kings and Lord of lords to bring righteous economic order to the world. Then will the entire world share in the bounty of a fair and just system. Our modern "Babylon" will be destroyed and be replaced by the Kingdom of God.