Good morning. It’s a great honor for me to join the
colference on the Global Majority efforts to create a
new chapter in world history. I’m dealing with BRICS
already 13 years. And I would long have expected this
day to come, the day when the BRICS would become a
real actor in world politics. But I was really amazed that
this day came so soon.

I would say that the recent [BRICS] summit in late
August in Johannesburg [South Africa], was truly an
historic event. It would go into history as historic, even
for technical reasons, because this was the date, and this
was the summit, when the membership in BRICS ex-
panded twofold, which nobody, including myself, has
expected. Moreover, substantially, this is truly an his-
toric summit, because this is the first time that the
BRICS has declared itself to be on the way, and to be
capable of creating a new world order: It’s really a tide
change.

Now 20 to 40 countries are interested in joining
BRICS, in this or that forum, and this is something that
nobody has expected, including myself.

Russia’s SMO Triggered a New
Chapter of History

What happened? I think that the answer lies in the
open confrontation which started with the special mili-
tary operation of Russia in Ukraine, in February 2022,
and it signaled the real, new chapter of history, when
the Western countries tried to forcefully pressure the
new centers of power, not to allow the appearance of a
new world order.

So, this is a turbulent moment of
history.

But the result was that the major-
ity of the countries, the Global Ma-
jority, did not support these efforts
by the West, although on paper and
in declaratory, including in the
United Nations, many countries do
accuse Russia of aggression. But
still, they do not agree with the West-
ern policies of trying to keep its
dominance in the global affairs and
to set the rules to which all others
should obey.

So there’s a new situation, when the Global Major-
ity wants a new model, a new model of international
relations which is not based on the traditional model,
which was used after the Second World War, when
major countries, the “global masters,” dictate to others
what they should do. And now the countries want
to have equal partnership, to have many, maybe compet-
ing centers of power which play their own role, think
with their own head, and doing their own policies.

Is a Global Westphalian System Possible?

In the long run, it may remind some of what was in
European history in the Peace of Westphalia system,
which was based on the sovereignty of nation-states,
equality, non-interference, and trying to accommodate
the interests of the partners. So maybe we are on the
way to a global Westphalian system. However, we
shouldn’t forget that the Westphalian system was the
result of the Thirty Years’ War—and maybe we are in
the process of such a war. And Ukraine is just the begin-
nning, and we may have another thirty years, or several
decades of wars in different parts of the world, before,
finally, such a system would emerge. This is a bad sce-

ario.

However, war may not last for 30 years. It may last
just for 30 minutes, if the major global powers would
just launch their nuclear ballistic missiles. Then the war
would be over—in 30 minutes: This will be the end of
the world.

We shouldn’t, of course, agree to this, either.
So the only way is to find a way to negotiate, to try to find a solution before it comes to this. And for this, I think the crucial thing is the change in the Western policies. The Global Majority doesn’t want to accept the policy of dominance, of dictate, of sanctions, of interference into internal affairs, of de facto robbery when the national assets are being confiscated voluntarily and unilaterally.

The BRICS Is Open to Cooperation with the West

So it’s not Russia and China which are isolated, which I hear often in different Western-sponsored forums, it’s rather the Western countries that are isolated. And BRICS, during this summit meeting, has shown its desire to accommodate the West. BRICS is not anti-Western. It’s not against the U.S., as a country. It’s not against the Western civilization. It’s not against Europe. BRICS has open arms to cooperate with these countries, to include them: BRICS is an inclusive structure. And so it’s open to dialogue, it’s open to cooperation, but not on the terms of “master and servant,” but on equal terms. And that’s what all of us should work for.

And, especially, I think that the U.S. is important in this area: The U.S. is a country with a rich history, with great natural resources, technology, finance, a land-rich population. And of course, this country plays a major role in this world, and may be very important for the future of mankind. But on equal terms, on terms of cooperation, with the newly emerging BRICS union, and Global Majority.

I wish I would see it happen. I’ve waited for 13 years to see the BRICS to become a real force in international relations. I hope that the next step, when the West would be included and involved into this process, can come sooner than that.

And good luck to everybody. Thank you.

Kiran Karnik

India and Chandrayaan-3: The Global South as Protagonist

This is the edited transcript of the video presentation of Kiran Karnik, delivered to Panel 2, “A New Paradigm in the History of Mankind Is Taking Shape” of the Schiller Institute’s Sept. 9, 2023 conference, “Let Us Join Hands with the Global Majority!” Mr. Karnik is the former President of the National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM) and worked for 20 years at the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). Subheads have been added.

Good evening. Greetings from Gurugram, a suburb of New Delhi, from where I join you today. I’m going to try to do something very ambitious this evening: I’m going to try to convey and compress the vastness of space—vast both literally and metaphorically—into a 12-, 13-minute conversation with you, sharing ideas about India’s space program, where it started, where it’s going, very briefly. But more important, looking at where the whole space adventure is going.

A lot of this has been triggered, and particularly recent interest, most certainly in India, but around the world, by in some sense what you might call it, the return to the Moon.

After the heady days of the ’60s and ’70s when there was a lot of competition between the then Soviet Union and the U.S., of getting to the Moon, landing there, planting your flag so to say, and those were driven a great deal by the Cold War, as we all know. But there was a lot of excitement about space and new discoveries, a lot of science was being done. After that, there was a break for quite some years, when the Moon and space did not appear as much in the public mind, or in exciting people about what is happening. But in recent years, they’re back again for a number of reasons, which I will touch on.

But most recently, as I said earlier, those who are in India, we’ve had an active space program, and figured a few weeks ago by a soft landing on the Moon of an