

BRICS nations resist anti-US label after Trump tariff threat

Reuters

Rio De Janeiro

Developing nations participating in the BRICS summit on Monday brushed away an accusation from US President Donald Trump that the bloc is anti-American, as he threatened them with additional 10 per cent tariffs.

DEADLINE LOOMS

Trump's threat on Sunday night came as the US government prepared to finalise dozens of trade deals with a range of countries before his July 9 deadline for the imposition of significant retaliatory tariffs.

"Tariffs should not be used as a tool for coercion and pressuring," said Mao Ning, the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson in Beijing.

"The BRICS advocates for 'win-win cooperation', she added, and "does not target any country".

South Africa, which was slapped with 30 per cent tariffs that were later suspended pending trade talks, reaffirmed that it is "not anti-American", trade ministry spokesman Kaamil Alli said, adding that talks with the US government "remain constructive and fruitful".

A Kremlin spokesman said

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Russia's cooperation with the BRICS was based on a "common world view", and "will never be directed against third countries".

India and Brazil, which are hosting the BRICS gathering, did not immediately provide an official response to Trump.

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva told reporters that he would only comment after wrapping up the summit. His opening remarks to BRICS leaders gathered in Rio de Janeiro on Monday focused on the environmental and public health issues on the summit's official agenda.

A Brazilian diplomat, who was not authorised to comment officially, said Trump's threat underscored the importance of the BRICS group to give developing nations a way to argue for fair and ef-

fective global ground rules on topics such as trade.

US INDISPENSABLE

Many BRICS members and many of the group's partner nations are highly dependent on trade with the US.

New member Indonesia's senior economic minister, Airlangga Hartarto, who is in Brazil for the BRICS summit, is scheduled to go to the US on Monday to oversee tariff talks.

Malaysia, which was attending as a partner country and was slapped with 24 per cent tariffs that were later suspended, said it maintains independent economic policies and is not focused on ideological alignment.

With forums such as the G7 and G20 groups of major economies hamstrung by divisions and Trump's disruptive 'America First' approach, the BRICS group has presented itself as a haven for multilateral diplomacy, amid violent conflicts and trade wars.

In a joint statement released on Sunday, leaders at the summit condemned the recent bombing of member nation Iran, and warned that the rise in tariffs threatened global trade, continuing its veiled criticism of Trump's tariff policies.