



[The U.S.'s Response to BRICS](#)

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At the recent G20 Summit held in New Delhi, world leaders came together to announce the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor, also known as IMEC. The corridor would be a rail and port system that connects India to Europe via the Middle East. The path would start in India, then through the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Israel, ending somewhere in Europe. The corridor has multiple objectives, including boosting trade, delivering energy and data, and improving connectivity.

President Biden said this deal presents an opportunity to bolster the economy in the Middle East and create a more stable region. Jon Finer, the U.S. deputy national security advisor, stated that the plan intends to help low and middle-income countries in the Middle East play a role in global commerce. He also remarked that this exemplifies Biden's plan to have "far-reaching investments." Additionally, as India's economic power grows, this plan would connect them to the rest of the world, cutting trade time to Europe by forty percent and involving them in the global economy. Most of the claims are vague as more specific details about the plan have not been disclosed.

This deal comes at a crucial time as the economic group BRICS is growing in power and influence. Just recently the group expanded, and now the West is rushing to respond. It seems the West is trying to counter with a plan to present the United States as an alternative partner for developing countries so they remain relevant in the region. It is also an opportune moment for Biden to announce a diplomatic deal as he prepares for the 2024 presidential election. Having a large international project in the works is a good way to show voters that Biden has been active his last four years in office, encouraging his reelection. Before IMEC, Biden did not have any other large international agreements to show constituents.

IMEC is being asserted as a clear alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative designed to span the globe. Since its release in 2013, the West has struggled to find a strong alternative to the Belt and Road plan. Now, they are presenting IMEC as a new path forward for the region. The White House says that they are not trying to force countries to choose sides, but are instead presenting another appealing option. The statement from the White House was brief, lacking many key details, but it enforced their new commitment to the route. IMEC also plays a role in the United States' ongoing diplomatic mission to normalize relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia; this plan would give them a direct trade route to share goods and information. This deal could be a way to convince Saudi Arabia that there is a real benefit to normalization with Israel, where before there was little incentive.

For the United States, IMEC is also an opportunity to combat China's growing influence. While fear of a growing China has existed since the 1990s, the threat has grown exponentially in recent years. Most Americans believe combatting China is a top priority. Despite Biden's comments otherwise, it seems that the United States is trying to quarantine China and systematically deplete its influence. The United States has lacked a cohesive grand strategy since the Cold War. With continual attempts to build stronger ties in Asia and the Middle East, it seems

Washington is reverting to a strategy of containment towards China. This time, however, containing China is less about halting the spread of communism, and more about maintaining economic dominance.

India holds a unique position in this deal because they are also a member of BRICS. President Biden has been courting Modi since he was elected, strengthening relations with India to combat China. IMEC is another step forward in this strategy. It appears that Modi is trying to use this position to his advantage. Playing both sides allows them to reap all the benefits, including cheap oil from Russia, and investments and arms from the United States.

In reality, IMEC is wishful thinking. No real plans have detailed the logistics of the deal, and it could take years to finalize. The geopolitical instability in the region also threatens the plan. Constant conflict in the Middle East will make it difficult to complete the construction and implementation of the corridor. Further, IMEC relies on multiple nations agreeing on the same goal, which has been relatively impossible as of late. Turkey, for example, has already objected to the project, asserting their own Development Road Project. They believe there is “no corridor without Turkey.” The projected price alone will hamper this project. The economic commitment from all involved parties will be high, coming at a time when spending money on foreign affairs is unpopular. While the idea of IMEC seems appealing, it is not a realistic proposal.