The toughest, most resilient people as both individuals and as societies all generally have one thing in common - self-sufficiency. This by no means suggests isolationism, but rather the ability to survive, even thrive through one's own work using resources at their own disposal.

As a principle, self-sufficiency, self-reliance, and individualism defined young nations like the United States, catapulting it upon the world stage as a global leader after spending time racked in debt and in England's shadow. By establishing its own industry, its own institutions (including those of a financial nature) and its own military might, the United States transcended the tangled webs of interdependency locking Europe's ever-shifting, fragile alliances together.

The evolution of human civilization along the lines of socioeconomics and technology has changed the roles, effectiveness and relevancy of those industries and institutions that had once made America great and in turn, those nations that had attempted to emulate such features have now all found themselves within the same boat - the boat of globalization.

Globalization is the hitherto pinnacle of interdependency, crippling any nation that falls foul of those sitting at the center of this entangled geopolitical order. There are many examples of nations that have fallen foul including Cuba, Iraq, Iran and more recently Russia. In each case, respective economies depended heavily upon imports or exports or both. The response in defense against crippling economic warfare is self-sufficiency.

In Cuba, urban agriculture became a necessity long before it became a trend in urban centers elsewhere around the world. Iran has become independent in many aspects including arms manufacturing. Iraq, it can be said, was ultimately undone by sanctions combined with military invasion and occupation by the United States. Now in Russia, we see a nation first shifting its markets toward friendlier allies, then attempting to develop itself from within.

Combined with the overall instability of a global system of interdependencies ran by an inept, greedy and self-destructive oligarchy centered upon Wall Street and London, economic warfare is a serious and continuous threat to all nations. And while headlines are dominated by America's economic war on Russia at the moment, amid that war many of the United State's closest allies have suffered as well.

France had planned on selling Russia two Mistral-class amphibious assault ships for a total of 1.2 billion Euros. Because of pressure on France to support NATO's proxy war against Russia in Ukraine, the delivery of the vessels has been indefinitely suspended. In addition to losing the 1.2 billion Euros for the contract already paid for by Russia, there is an additional penalty of 251 million Euros. Because of France's tangling interdependencies with the US, European Union, and England, it is incapable of making a decision that represents its own best interests and those of the French people.

Similar scenarios have played out across Southern Europe where Russia's South Stream Pipeline was to run but has
since been canceled due to US, British and EU pressure.

Likewise for Russia, instead of building their own amphibious assault ships, they have decided to depend on the French which was clearly a mistake.

In theory, for nations capable of building their own ships, cars, electronics or producing their own food and energy, the whims of foreign interests have much less impact. In practice, such nations are difficult to come by, and vulnerabilities in the form of sociopolitical and economic interdependancies are a feature of nearly every nation's geopolitical standings.

Self-Sufficiency as a Matter of National Defense

The BRICS nations, Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, as well as other growing developing nations particularly in Southeast Asia, would do well to not only learn the dangers of interdependancies, but the merit of proactive self-sufficiency, not as a knee-jerk reaction, but as a proactive form of national defense.

Everything from industry to agriculture and even human health is becoming increasing dependent on advanced technology. Nations lagging behind in terms of education, research, and development are likely to fall prey to monopolies controlled from beyond their borders. A nation dependent on another is not only not truly a free and independent nation state, it is also immensely vulnerable to the meddling of those nations who control these monopolies.

Washington and Riyadh’s grip on the petrodollar is one example of this. Their ability to then manipulate global energy prices has been regularly used as an economic weapon against its enemies, most recently Russia. While a clumsy and unsustainable weapon to wield, the world would be a far better and more stable place if the firewalls of socioeconomic independence were stronger.

Should Russia prevail, it is hoped that while they will likely continue reaping the benefits of their resource-based export economy, they will also look inward for another source of strength to augment, then eventually replace their vulnerable interdependancies. Other BRICS nations would be wise to begin doing so long before it becomes a necessity. For nations like Brazil, who has invested decades in developing energy independence, such a proposition is much more in reach.

Ultimately, self-sufficiency as an individual or as a nation or bloc of nations does not mean isolationism. It means being able to thrive without, and thriving twice as much with. While it is difficult to convince industries and entrepreneurs to steer toward this more sustainable ground, tying self-sufficiency in with national defense can allow for measures otherwise shortsighted business sectors would reject. In the long run, say in Russia, business leaders who eagerly pursued globalism as a means toward riches are surely regretting their shortsightedness now. Sanctions force Russia, under pressure, to implement measures that should have been put in place years ago.

Tying self-sufficiency to national security, particularly now in Russia where jobs and prosperity are in peril is not a long stretch, especially considering that Russia's current economic woes are part of what is essentially an attack on Russian sovereignty, peace and prosperity to begin with.

Ulson Gunnar, a New York-based geopolitical analyst and writer especially for the online magazine "New Eastern Outlook".