

Editorial Note by the Editor-in-Chief: Precipitate aggravation of regional wars and deterioration of conflicts

As the first quarter of the 21st century is drawing to its completion, the destructive acts of rampant unilateralism are multiplying ferociously. The entrenched ethos of anomia, the condition of double standards, and the impunity afforded to violators of international law such as Israel, are fomenting arbitrary stances and provoking multitudinous disturbances in the Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean region. These lamentably characterise international affairs in this region, yet the NATO and the EU, among the strongest collective organizations globally, demonstratemanifestly biased stances and inconsistencies. Consequently, the pace of violence can only keep accelerating, and inter- and intra-state affairs will continue to deteriorate.

Since only last year:

- a. The devastating ‘special military operation’ after the invasion in Ukraine has continued unabated. Russia is gaining battleground momentum and territories despite the 18-fold EU sanctions and support to Ukraine in intelligence and weaponry.
- b. Israel’s IDF has obliterated Gaza, perpetrating a historically unprecedented kind of genocide, not only because it is being televised live. Incriminating decisions against Israel and prompt warnings by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) towards Israeli government have made no difference whatsoever. Israel’s overly aggressive conduct has revealed a sui generis strategy of unique supremacy. In this light it intensified its ‘enemy leadership decapitation strategy’. It has multiplied its bombing campaigns against bordering countries, and attacked Iran, unprovoked, bombarding government targets, while declaring its pursuit of ‘Iran regime change’.
- c. These intense Israeli aggressions against Iran were soon followed by the

bombardment of four nuclear energy plants of Iran by the USA with B2 bombers.

d. Meanwhile, Turkey, has been relentlessly pursuing its own expansionist agenda, with western leaders condoning it (e.g. J. Stoltenberg backing Turkey's invasion of Syria). It is deploying intimidating threats (the *casus belli* warning), but also air and naval harassments against Greece for attempting to develop legitimate sea projects, thereby effectively managing to stall them.

e. Turkey, is once again domineering against Cyprus, reinforcing the division of the island, rather than promoting a unitary solution, according to UN resolutions.

f. An impromptu regime change 'occurred' in Syria, with the crucial support of Turkey. Currently, the leader of Syria is a former ISIS jihadist warrior.

g. The region is moreover experiencing attacks on religious establishments, namely on the status of the monastery of Aghia Aikaterini of Sina, but also the recent deadly terrorist attack in a Christian church in Syria.

Amidst such intensifying controversies and war manifestations, international political organizations have acted weakly or appear nonchalant or absent; they either tacitly approve transgressions or remain enigmatically 'silent', with the sole exceptions of the UN and the ICJ. Thus, ostensibly rules-bound multilateral agencies, such as NATO and the EU, have exhibited a strange indifference towards these ongoing conflicts. Peculiarly, the sole war that they have engaged in promptly and materially is that in Ukraine.

On top of all these bizarre evolutions, the second Trump administration has inaugurated a flabbergasting upending of the long prevailing economic model of the USA. President Trump has launched an inimical, obsolete and sui generis mercantilist and protectionist policy style, imposed exorbitant tariffs, but also threatens to take over and occupy foreign lands. This 'onslaught' soon inhibited international free trade, gravely disturbing the world economy. Such tremendous economic and trade

unilateralism by the US, betrays covert, undercurrent state fears for loss of hegemony. In this context, terror threats and actual damage delivered, are instrumentalised as a tactic to regain lost global control but primarily the country's very economic sustainability.

The neoliberal-economic doctrine has 'reigned' since 1979 and peaked triumphantly during the globally agreed free-trade accord in the 1994 Marrakesh Agreement. In a historic move, at the inauguration of the World Trade Organization (WTO, formerly GATT) the People's Republic of China was accepted into this 'capitalist' free trade system. Since its inception, China along with other 'Global South' economies thrived in this free trade environment. However, rich capitalist economies such as those of the US and Japan started lagging behind. Global free trade competition undermined the American economy, which suffered in comparison with developing BRICS economies. With the proclaimed 'MAGA agenda', President Trump, contrary to every WTO regulation, rushed to abolish free trade rules grossly and unilaterally. Hence, signaling that the neoliberal model is considered as good and acceptable, only so long as it favours America's unilateral economic gains. Implicit in this perception are fears about the economic survival of strong capitalist states, which may also explain why numerous Western leaders have been blindly seeking solutions in belligerence. Current war-mongering manias and campaigns of de facto unilateralism, cynically disregard fundamental international principles of law, even though they are pushing the entire globe to the brink of disaster. Such acts are outrageously immoral.

Where is this steady deterioration of global coexistence and of regional affairs leading us? What are the limits of unilateralism? What solutions can societies, nations and states afford? Following a 'heedless, rampant and wild globalization', international relations currently face existential challenges due to the unprecedented upending of a rules-based global system. Peaceful coexistence and fair interest-seeking cannot be obtained without trust, confidence and consideration of common principles and values. Insecurity, volatility and instability are set to increase rapidly in these circumstances in which crises and chaos loom large. The spiral of fears and of blind phobias cannot be allowed to determine decision making. This will only corrode the remnants of rationality. What is urgently required is judicious endurance during the birth-pangs of a multipolar world, in which the formerly dominant power, can no longer prevail by blackmail, or by the extreme and self-defeating moves of a wild unilateralism.

In this issue the BSEMR is hosting two research articles and one commentary. Firstly, in his essay entitled: ‘Palestinian statehood and future dynamics regarding a two-state solution: Feasibility, chances and prospects Mr. Stefano Lovi, a PhD Candidate of Global Studies and Innovation at the University of International Studies of Rome – UNINT examines the controversial topic and the contestable proposal for the ‘two-state solution for Israel and Palestine’. He explores the feasibility of such a UN-backed policy programme and delves into challenging questions about the potentiality of a mutual compromise of the parties in question and the problematic implementation aspects thereof. The necessity for compromises diminishes the prospects of such a mutually beneficial, fair, desirable yet controversial international political project. Crucially, chances remain slim, as long as the USA refuses to lift its veto in the UN processes and fails to agree with the 95% of the other UN member states.

Subsequently, in his article entitled ‘The Political Economy of Neoliberalism in the Global South’, Mr. Dionysis Asimiadis, a PhD Candidate of Political Science at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, addresses the economic regime and the conditions applying since the phase of the prevalence of neo-liberalism, that is, over the last 50 years, since 1979 and the ascendancy of Margaret Thatcher to government in the UK. The author considers the geopolitical implications of this phase, focusing more specifically on countries from the ‘global South’, including Egypt, as a case in the BSEM region. He attempts to explain the ways in which the policies of neoliberalism have transformed developing countries’ political and economic systems, with immediate and far-reaching consequences for their societies.

Lastly, in his commentary entitled: ‘Endurance and self-sacrifice: Religion and People’s power in the Israeli Palestinian conflict’, Mr. Vasilis Xidias, a Christian Orthodox theologian, political analyst, and essayist specialising in theology, philosophy, and political theory, focuses on the endangering of religious rights in the war-ridden regions of the Middle East. He argues that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict cannot be resolved through military or geopolitical power. He suggests instead that its outcome depends on the endurance of the populations involved. In his regard, contrary to what is widely believed, religion could play an affirmative and a constructive role in fostering a mutually beneficial, democratic resolution to the conflict.

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