

EDITOR'S NOTE: THE UNSTABLE MULTIPOLARITY

The global system has already entered the phase of *Multipolarity*, something taken for granted by most analysts and statesmen. However, contrary to what many considered to be a universal panacea (with the BRICS GDP PPP surpassing that of the G7), it is configured as an *Unstable Multipolarity*. American actions, with the return of Republican Donald Trump to the White House, seem to reinforce the reactive character of the United States against this trend, explicitly admitted by Washington. The concept of *Unstable Multipolarity* was forged at NERINT/UFRGS and is being developed by its researchers and applied in their prospective studies.

The so-called *Unipolarity* ended without ever having existed. It was a power vacuum created by the disappearance of the Soviet superpower, which was filled by the US with unsuccessful tactical actions, as they lacked a Grand Strategy. In the 1990s, they made political advances in the post-Soviet space, but it was Europe, led by Germany, that took advantage, gaining a new lease of life. However, undeniably, the Americans maneuvered well over the chaos they created in the Balkans and the Middle East, appearing to have control of the situation and a consistent project.

At the turn of the century and millennium, however, a new reality was emerging. September 11, 2001 signaled the rise of Islamic political extremism; the great financial crisis of 2008 resulted in China's economic advance, the creation of BRICS, the Russian reaction in Georgia, the Arab Spring, and Obama's Pivot to Asia. Moscow's annexation of Crimea and the Donbass conflict, Trump's election, the Covid pandemic, the Russo-Ukrainian War under the Biden administration, and the conflicts in Israel were catalysts. The military conflict in Ukraine and economic sanctions against the Kremlin led to global realignments, increasing the connections of Russia, India, and China with the South, particularly in the Middle East and Africa, with Europe being the most affected.

Since then, alignments and realignments have been constant, temporary, multiple and multi-vector, encompassing trade, investment, defense and diplomacy. Many arrangements are being tested and changed continuously, with no longer defined "blocs", as can be seen with NATO and

the expanded BRICS. With the Trump II administration, the United States seeks to build a geoeconomic space, prioritizing the Republican tradition of rejecting multilateral mechanisms. The novelty is that Washington could now act wisely as a *primus inter pares*: instead of trying to regain lost hegemony, it can use its residual superiority in some areas to play with other powers. However, would Trump's businessman diplomacy be refined enough for this? Only time will tell.

Analysts' attention is primarily focused on relations between the great powers, their leaderships and elections in key countries. However, there are *rising middle powers* that do not receive due attention and, surprisingly, become protagonists and influence international events. They have been courted or threatened by some and others, but, given the increased number of powers, they have increasing bargaining power.

In this context, we publish here a set of articles that deal with the Silk Road cases applied to the classical geopolitics of Mackinder and Greenpeace and hybrid multilateralism. Next, we discuss the Sino-American astropolitical dispute, Australia's concerns about the growing Chinese presence in the South Pacific and the Brazil-US relationship, from Soft Balancing to Bandwagoning, the implications of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict on the subsequent invasion of Ukraine. Finally, we have Jordan's foreign policy options in the face of new challenges, an analysis of the reform of the security sectors and peacebuilding in the Yemen Civil War and the construction of popular identity in ASEAN. They are scholars from the United States, Indonesia, Russia, Pakistan, Brazil, Spain and Jordan.

The edition is completed by an interesting review of the book "A Theory of Global Power", which represents a synthesis of the work of Professor José Luís Fiori, a leading academic on International Political Economy in Brazil.

The perspective of authors from the Geopolitical South enriches academic and strategic perceptions regarding the topics analyzed, materializing the permanent objectives of AUSTRAL: Brazilian Journal of Strategy and International Relations. This is crucial at a time when the global scenario is evolving into a series of conflicts and tensions, which have already led to military escalations, in a highly unpredictable scenario. More than ever, it is necessary for the Academy to urgently undertake a critical-realistic analysis, leaving aside postmodern approaches and prescriptive narratives.

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