

EDITOR'S NOTE

Analúcia Danilevicz Pereira

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The predominant view in the Western political and academic narrative on Africa portrays the continent as permanently unstable. Although from an apparently critical perspective, the resumption of Africa's strategic importance has been discussed from the idea of a "new partition". It is undeniable that the African continent has regained its strategic importance after the lost decades in the 1980s and 1990s, strengthening nation-states, their institutions, and regional organizations. Certainly, levels of instability are a reality, but much more complex. The potential for growth and development has placed African states in a relevant position to act positively on the significant systemic international disputes, which oppose antagonistic projects by the Great Powers ("militaristic" West vs. "developmental" East). In addition, it is important to observe the mechanisms that these states use to deal with the impacts produced by international instability.

We have recently witnessed a new escalation of conflict in Sudan (April 2023), exploited by analysts as another illustrative moment of African "disorder". When analyzing the conflict between the two military groups, it becomes clear that the dispute for power and resources does not occur in isolation, but is linked to international interests and the antagonistic projects mentioned, as well as the intended pattern of international cooperation. At the same time, positive processes, such as attempts to protect national models against destabilizing threats in the Sahel (Hybrid Wars, Color Revolutions, Regime Changes, and waves of terrorism, for example), are little analyzed. Furthermore, the actions taken by African leaders to propose a peace plan to both Russia and Ukraine were insufficiently investigated. The peace plan received a favorable response from the Russian president but was rejected by the Ukrainian counterpart. In a bold diplomatic move, seven African heads of state, representing their regions, formed the African Peace Initiative delegation.

African states have thus been presenting themselves as important actors that, individually or in multilateral forums, have indicated a possible majority around constructing a stable international order that allows the developing world favorable conditions for the coexistence of different national projects. This issue of the BJAS presents seven articles by authors from Brazil, Cuba, the United Arab Emirates, Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Kenya. The texts discuss relevant topics such as international cooperation, security issues, and economic and political development.

In “Asia’s growing global influence: a study of India’s Africa Policy”, Hamdy A. Hassan discusses the role of soft power in Asia-Africa relations, focusing on India’s policy towards the African continent. Yoslán Silverio González, in the article “Contemporary terrorism: a theoretical perspective”, analyzes terrorism as an expanding trend that has a significant impact on global security. According to the author, the majority of analyses conducted by Western academics regarding these matters are permeated by an approach that associates terrorism with “jihadism”, “Islamism” or, more problematically, that fail to differentiate between armed movements with social or territorial claims and actual terrorist groups. “The evolution of UN peace operations from a human security perspective: the dilemma in the issue of Western Sahara” is presented by Guilherme Moreira Dias, José Maria Sydow de Barros, and Túlio Pires Barboza. The authors approach the topic of Western Sahara through the lens of human security and the development of UN peace operations within the framework of an expanding international security agenda.

Subsequently, two analyses of Mozambique are presented from a political and security perspective. Ercílio Neves Brandão Langa, in the article “Situation analysis of the Chissano government: domestic transitions and economic pragmatism in Mozambique (1986-2004)”, analyzes the political conjuncture of Mozambique during the Chissano Government. Fátima Chimarizeni Papelo discusses “Emerging challenges and opportunities in humanitarian assistance in Mozambique: a case study from Cabo Delgado”. According to the author, international humanitarian agencies operating in Cabo Delgado have taken on roles within the humanitarian domain that subject them to ambiguous circumstances and pose challenges for coordinating humanitarian assistance. Nevertheless, the Mozambican state needs to redefine its strategy and adopt a proactive national stance.

In their article titled “The local economic impacts of railways: Kenya’s Standard Gauge Railway (SGR)”, Nancy Githaiga and Hailay Shifare examine the SGR project and highlight its varied economic effects. According to the

authors' findings, throughout the planning and construction phases of the SGR, there was a notable increase in land and property values, alongside a rise in commercial activities along the route. These changes can be attributed to shifts in land distribution and alterations in land use patterns. In addition, Kenya and China should jointly address the issues of employment and skills transfer. Finally, in the article "Brazil's military-technical cooperation with Namibia: aspects of a strategic partnership", Kamilla Raquel Rizzi, Naiane Inez Cossul, and Patrick Bueno analyze how Brazil's African policy consolidation and its aspirations to strengthen its geopolitical position in the Strategic Surroundings serve as motivating factors for pursuing technical-military cooperation with Namibia, with a particular emphasis on strategic defense.

The BJAS publishes a bilingual electronic version in both Portuguese and English. Thus, we welcome contributions from colleagues in Brazil and abroad, aiming to establish connections that foster the expansion of knowledge and the development of a Southern perspective regarding the African continent and its relationships with other nations.

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