

ABSTRACTS

1/2009 Świat na przełomie stuleci

Jadwiga Kiwerska

A Time of Great Turbulence

The two last decades have been exceptionally eventful. The end of the cold war, symbolized by the collapse of the Berlin wall in 1989 triggered historic changes on the international scene. The processes that were underway accelerated, others were launched, new phenomena and challenges emerged, "dormant" antagonisms erupted with sometimes enormous force, new and so far unknown threats appeared. Although in many aspects the world has changed for the better (there is more integration, the sphere of democracy and free market has expanded) we have also been faced with many difficult and complex problems (terrorism, growing nationalism, imperial aspirations). That is why the situation in the world today demands from the international community greater solidarity, decisiveness, and well thought-out actions.

Wanda Pilch

Freedom in the Contemporary World

The problem of freedom in the contemporary world is no longer a question of independence. "Contemporary" freedom resembles a continuous and repeatedly undertaken process of dialogical agreement between parties to a debate, e.g. supranational communities, states, or other subjects of public life, such as institutions and associations. Freedom also pertains to relations and bonds, so it has to do with the "relational" matter that unites people. It consists in creating and building, and so cannot be labeled as a fact. To struggle for freedom today means to seek and find possibilities of communication, agreement and consensus. Autonomy, sovereignty and solidarity between people are therefore the fundamental correlates of freedom. Only an agent (e.g. a person or state) strong in one's autonomy and independent in one's reasons (interests, rights), self-conscious and responsible, can create bonds and relations of solidarity, which means such bonds and relations that social activity is directed towards a common good and becomes a value in itself, a value of people's public life

Maria Tomczak

Terrorism Networks in the World. Connections between Groups and their Financing

One of the most effective methods of fighting terrorism is to cut off the sources of its financing. That is why issues related to this problem are of special interest to people and institutions engaged in fighting terrorism as well as scholars. Regrettably, scientific investigations on the ways of financing terrorism and business connections between particular groups face serious difficulties due to a lack of reliable and verifiable data. We are largely left to conjectures and therefore it is only possible to present some trends and hypotheses. The article discusses ways of obtaining funds by terrorist groups from mid-19th century until today. It also shows the development of terrorism from amateur operations on a relatively small scale by Russian revolutionists and western anarchists, through "substitute war" from the cold war period up to a union of politics, religion and purely criminal activities that we witness today. In consequence,

ideologically committed enthusiasts guided by their own peculiar ethics have been gradually replaced by ruthless cynics who are ready to break any taboo.

Katarzyna Żodź-Kuźnia

Globalization as a Main Factor of the Evolution of the Contemporary International System

Globalization is the basic law of development and change of the contemporary international system, giving it a new dimension and intensifying hitherto processes of the evolution of international relations. What is especially significant is the impact of globalization on state and non-state participants of the international system. This impact is ambiguous: it can strengthen some subjects and weaken others sometimes even to the point of undermining the sense of their existence. We can also see a growing impact of globalization processes on the structure of the international system. The formal legal stratum of international order is gradually disintegrating due to a relativization of the common principles of international relations on which it has so far been founded. Also the vertical dimension of the contemporary international system is evolving towards further verticalization of its structure. This is accompanied by the emergence of a new quality in international relations in the form of global problems, i.e. problems which on account of globalization assume a worldwide dimension.

Jarosław Czyżewski

Child Soldiers in Contemporary Armed Conflicts

The practice of recruiting and exploiting children is an inseparable feature of a majority of contemporary armed conflicts. It is estimated that approximately 250,000 children are currently fighting in 17 armed conflicts, mainly in Africa and Asia. Children are recruited because they are "cheap" to maintain, obedient, do not question orders, are easy to manipulate. A major influence on the occurrence of this phenomenon is also a change in the nature of armed conflicts as well as proliferation and technological development of light weapons. Another determinant is the existence of groups of children particularly threatened by recruitment and negative external conditions that often induce them to volunteer to join armed groups. Child soldiers are exploited as porters, sentries, spies, cooks, sexual slaves, and above all as soldiers fighting on the front line. They are forced to kill, rob and mutilate their relatives and the civilian population. The recruitment of children results in physical and psychic injuries that are difficult to overcome.

Anna Sakson

The State of the Natural Environment and the Environmental Conservation Activity of the UN

Protection of the natural environment is one of the fundamental problems of the contemporary world. The major threats of the 21st century include global warming, water pollution and decreasing water resources, deforestation and loss of biological diversity. Many international organizations engage in counteracting the effects of those threats and the United Nations Environment Programme plays an important role in this respect. The organization is an agenda of the UN, founded in 1972 to monitor the state of the natural environment worldwide and to identify problems that require international cooperation. Furthermore, it assists in the codification of the international law for natural environment conservation and recommends implementation of national environmental policies by governments in various countries. The article also presents the genesis and structure of the organization and the range of its activities. Special emphasis is placed on the role of the UNEP as administrator of the Secretariat of the

United Nations Convention on Climate Change. This is followed by a discussion of the results of the 14th Conference of Parties to the Convention that took place in Poznań from 1 to 12 December 2008.

Rafał Matera

The Problems of Developing Countries at G7/G8 Summits

The first summit of the group of industrial nations was held at the Château de Rambouillet near Paris from 15th to 17th November 1975. It was attended by representatives of six countries: France, Japan, the FRG, the USA, Great Britain and Italy. The name G7 was adopted for summits held from 1976 onward, following the incorporation of Canada into the group. Since 1977 representatives of the Commissions of European Communities also attended the meetings, though only as observers. G7 was transformed into G8 in 1998 at the summit in Birmingham after having functioned for a few years as G7+Russia. Economic declarations and communiqués from the summits of the leaders of the member states contained schemes of a strictly economic nature but also social and institutional proposals. Besides guidelines on macroeconomic policy, and trade and monetary systems, issues concerning environment protection, education or health care also appeared on the agenda. Discussions on the problems of developing countries recurred during all the summits, but implementation of relevant postulates, especially those concerning debt cancellation strategy and coordination of official development assistance were only formulated at the turn of the second and third millennium. The article is an attempt to show how G7/8 engaged for the South over a period of more than thirty years of its activity. The problem of effectiveness of particular initiatives is a more complex issue that requires further investigations and separate studies. This publication is based mostly on documents accepted by the leaders of the member states at annual summits.

Andrzej Sepkowski

A Country of Crusaders

Americans have been expansionistic since their colonial beginnings, undertaking to impose submission on the interior for over two centuries. This expansionism proved to be an unusually strong binder for the society of the young state, assuming the shape of "Manifest Destiny" of President Polk and his successors. It usually served down-to-earth interests but was legitimized with ideas of great missions supposed to spread the perfect system created by the "nation of nations". The ideas of missions both in their peaceful and conquer form have become an integral part of the American "civil religion", ritualized by practically all its leaders. Missionism combined with expansionism was the dominant tendency which came to the foreground after 1989. The new hegemony gradually transformed into domination on the international scene, forcing other agents to adopt measures desirable for the neo-liberal establishment. The determining factor was the power of the military-industrial conglomerate, which was not to be underestimated, as today over 600 billion dollars are allotted to military demands. It also seems that President Barack Obama is fated to the practices of a crusader even though the hopes connected with him are hopes for a different, better world.

Sebastian Wojciechowski

The United States of America as an Example of a "Lonely" Superpower

"Loneliness" on the international scene means a more or less significant either volunteered or enforced distancing oneself from the rest of the international community. It can pertain to

different spheres: political, economic, technological or cultural, can be attributed to various causes and manifests itself in a variety of ways. It usually befalls states or other agents that function in the international system. However, the situation of a "lonely" superpower is a special case. The above issues are discussed on the example of the present position of the USA. The following questions have been taken as a point of departure: How does contemporary American domination manifest itself? Does the USA today meet the criteria of a "lonely" superpower? What are the causes, symptoms and consequences of the international "loneliness" of the USA?

Radosław Fiedler

The USA and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict of 1991-2008. Instruments, Possibilities and Limitations of the American Mediator

At the beginning of the 1990s it seemed that the peace process in which the American mediator was engaged would lead to a final agreement between Israelis and Palestinians. Subsequent American administrations had at their disposal instruments that enabled them to influence the sides of the conflict, but the calming of the conflict depended mainly on Israelis and Palestinians themselves. The American side, however, had more understanding for the arguments of the Israeli governments than for Palestinian postulates. Even the personal involvement of President Clinton could not break the growing impasse during the summit at Camp David. The mediations were an evident failure as they did not bring a significant change in the optics of the conflict - mutual mistrust remained and did not disappear even after American diplomacy gave guarantees for Israel and Palestinian Autonomy. The "road map" presented by President G.W. Bush, which was to create a broad framework for a future agreement did not lead to a breakthrough, similarly to the conference in Annapolis (November 2007). The Republican administration almost from the beginning approved the policy of the Israeli authorities and one-sided initiatives such as withdrawal from Gaza or the construction of the so-called security fence. The complicated situation aggravated further after the victory of Hamas in the election of 2006, not to mention the conflict of Israel and Hamas in Gaza at the turn of 2008/2009. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict will certainly require a more intensive mediatory involvement of the USA as part of a new American strategy towards the Near East.

Witold Ostant

The Anti-Missile Shield as an Instrument of American Supremacy in the International Security System

The article aims at elucidating the problem of the so called anti-missile shield, which can be interpreted as an element of American supremacy in the international system. The study is divided into four parts that correspond to specific contexts of the analysis. The first part deals with the origin of the program of the anti-missile shield which goes back to the 1950s. Emphasis is placed on the long range of the undertaking and the favorable attitude of the American administration towards it irrespectively of the party represented in power. The second part looks at technological issues and the global character of the venture as well as its military-technological and propaganda dimensions. Part three discusses the negative attitude towards the program on the part of two countries aspiring to the status of superpowers: the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China. Attention is drawn to the efforts made by these countries to neutralize the American endeavors to maintain military supremacy. This is a topic relatively little known to the general public as it attracts marginal interest of the mass media. The last part concerns the attitude of the European countries to the American project and focuses on the polarization of standpoints of the member states of NATO and the EU.