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L'attenzione del mondo economico e finanziario internazionale – in particolare di Cina, Giappone, India, Brasile e Stati Uniti – è da qualche tempo rivolta all'Africa, un continente enorme, ricco di materie prime (petrolio, metalli, terreni), ma molto vario quanto a storia – pre e post coloniale – e difficilmente riconducibile a unità sotto il profilo politico: 53 Stati, sei macroregioni, un miliardo di abitanti e una superficie tre volte superiore a quella dell'Europa.

Nonostante la crisi abbia bruscamente interrotto il «momento felice» dell'economia africana, come scrive uno degli autori di questo numero, gli investimenti hanno sì rallentato il passo, ma non si sono arrestati e continuano ad affluire. I paesi premiati sono ovviamente quelli politicamente più stabili, in cui vige una *rule of law* in grado di proteggere i diritti di proprietà. Tra questi spiccano il Sudafrica, il Botswana e Mauritius.

Se il tasso medio di crescita aveva raggiunto nel 2008 circa il 6%, quest'anno, secondo le proiezioni più affidabili, dovrebbe subire una contrazione e attestarsi intorno al 4,5%, per poi riprendere a ritmo più sostenuto già a partire dal 2011. Dati che le élite locali osservano con grande apprensione, ma che al tempo confermano che il continente è sempre più integrato nell'economia mondiale.

A considerare l'Africa come la prossima economia emergente sono in molti. L'approccio di paesi come Cina, India, Brasile nei confronti dei paesi del continente rappresenta un modello d'intervento nuovo, che ha posto fine alla supremazia dei paesi occidentali: materie prime contro la costruzione di infrastrutture: case, strade, aeroporti, linee ferroviarie, linee elettriche, reti di telecomunicazioni. E questi investimenti, in parte condotti dai grandi fondi sovrani, per la loro natura ne attraggono altri e favoriscono nuove partnership pubbliche e private con aziende di tutto il mondo.

Un continente in movimento, che però ha ancora un lungo elenco di problemi gravi non risolti: conflitti non del tutto pacificati, pronti a riesplodere, elevata mortalità infantile, AIDS, povertà.

L'eccessiva frammentazione non ha fatto ancora emergere una capacità di leadership politica continentale: due paesi si contendono oggi la guida: la Nigeria, che ha però dei gravi problemi irrisolti nel suo Delta, conflitti cruenti tra musulmani e cristiani e un equilibrio politico precario, e il Sudafrica, che per la sua posizione geografica deve necessariamente spingere la sua influenza verso Nord. Entrambi i paesi hanno molte carte da giocare per rafforzare la loro influenza strategica e assumere il comando, anche se il Sudafrica gode del vantaggio di essere il primo investitore nel continente, di aver assunto il ruolo di mediatore nella risoluzione-stabilizzazione dei conflitti e di iniziare a rappresentare, per molti africani, un'alternativa all'immigrazione in Europa. L'assegnazione, in rappresentanza dell'Africa, a uno dei due paesi di un possibile seggio al Consiglio di Sicurezza dell'ONU costituirà il momento di verifica decisivo.

L'unione fa la forza, dice il vecchio proverbio. E i paesi africani cominciano a rendersi conto quanto può pesare, se uniti, la loro forza. Dopo i BRICS, la grande sorpresa economica del nuovo millennio potrebbe essere proprio l'Africa. Del resto, *hic sunt leones...*

DOSSIER: AFRICAN DAWN

Abundant Resources and Poor Development Opportunities, *Armando Rungi and Silvia Merler*

In the worldwide race to resources to ensure an acceptable level of economic development for present and future generations, the African continent assumes a central role for its abundant natural capital. Notwithstanding the renewed interest of advanced economies, and more recently of the emerging Asian economies, Africa is a continent rich in resources but poorly integrated within the new global economic system.

Keywords: Africa, Natural Capital, Economic Development

New Scenarios, Old Dynamics, *Francesco Galtieri*

Africa has a huge economic development potential, and many markets rely on it to emerge from the global economic crisis. But what is Africa's geopolitical role today? Based on the connections between international development cooperation, investment flows and political relations, the article describes the Third Continent's outlook on the 2010 worldwide scenario.

Keywords: Africa, Geopolitical Role

The Value of Biodiversity, *Roberta Giaconi interviews Augustine Morkel and Harriet Davies-Mostert*

Is biodiversity a resource for Africa? Poverty, wars and famine have often prevented the implementation of policies aimed to protect the natural wealth of the African continent. In South Africa one out of four plant species is at risk and many animal species are endangered. Something, however, is slowly changing. We have discussed the challenges, prospects

and the current status of biodiversity in Africa and South Africa with two experts: Augustine Morkel, Estate Manager of the Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden, in the heart of the Cape Floristic Region, and Harriet Davies-Mostert, Director of Science at the Endangered Wildlife Trust, a Non-Profit Organization dedicated to conserving threatened species in Southern Africa.

Keywords: Africa, Biodiversity

Two Billion Africans in 2050, Zoé Suarez interviews Jean-Pierre Guengant

In most developing areas in the world, such as Asia and Latin America, demographic transition is over, but it is still ongoing in Africa. Africa's population exceeded one billion last year, and it is the youngest continent in the world. The fertility rate is still very high (4.6 births per woman). Demographer Jean-Pierre Guengant draws a non optimistic overall picture of the African continent's demographic development.

Keywords: Africa, Population Trend

Cape Town. Great Ambitions, Uncertain Development, Roberta Giacconi

Sixteen years after the end of the apartheid regime, South Africa is a country full of contradictions. It has huge mineral resources and a gorgeous nature, but one of the most unequal distributions of income and wealth, aggravated by a high level of crime and HIV/AIDS infection. South Africans are still obsessed with race, and their government is often dominated by corruption and scandals. This article looks at South Africa through the eyes of its people, with their challenges, their wish to change and their strong fear of failure.

Keywords: South Africa, Uncertain Development

INSIDE THE CRISIS

The Crisis and the Euro, *George Soros*

In his article published in the «New York Review of Books» on July 12, 2010, George Soros, Hungarian – American philanthropist and financier, analyses the central role of the euro in the current economic crisis and questions Germany’s attitude toward the European Union.

Keywords: Euro, Economic Crisis, Germany

NATURE AS A LIMIT

Middle East: Water is a Crucial Resource, *Shlomi Dinar*

Although the Middle East already suffers from severe water scarcity, future scenarios that take into account the effects of climate change point to even more acute water shortages. Because rivers and underground aquifers are shared among a number of countries and entities, disputes can often arise over water sharing. Yet, cooperation may likewise result as countries need to coordinate their actions to more efficiently utilize a shared resource. The article analyzes the Israel-Palestinian, Israel-Jordan, Israel-Syrian, and Turkey-Syria-Iraq cases and briefly considers how conflict and cooperation have evolved. Because the availability of water in this region is key to both peace and development, special attention is given to how regional and international coordination may be encouraged through diplomacy, innovation, and investment.

Keywords: Middle East, Water

Adapting to Climate Change, Lorenzo Chelleri and Elena Ridolfi

It is difficult to sum up in a few words what climate change is, and it is even more difficult to imagine the implications of adapting to climate change. In this article we will look into the spatial and thematic interactions that connect the topic of adaptation to the complexity of life on our planet. From the importance of biodiversity to the role of cities, adaptation goes hand in hand with technology developments and prompt action, which is essential during environmental and climate crises.

Keywords: Climate Change, Adaptation

INTERNATIONAL LETTERS

Europe is a Process, Dino Pinelli

The paper discusses the nature and role of the European Union. In a context marked by globalisation, interconnectedness and diversity, the European Union should be seen as a process, not an end-point. The complexity, variability and continuous change (of border and architecture) should be considered as integral parts of the European project (and not a limitation).

Keywords: European Union, EU process

Underground and Nuclear, Sandro Malavasi

Stewart Brand is a pioneer of the American underground of the 1970s. His name is permanently linked to the legendary *Whole Earth Catalog* and to the subsequent «Co-Evolution Quartely». Active and determined, in 1996 he founded, with Daniel Hillis (the inventor of the supercomputer Connection Machines), Kevin Kelly (editor of «Wired»), Peter Swartz (chairman of

Global Business Network), Brian Eno (musician), Paul Saffo (spokesman of the Institute for the Future), Mitchell Kapor (co-founder of Electronic Frontier Foundation), Esther Dyson (editor of the premier software industry newsletter «Release 1.0» and Douglas Carlston (co-founder of Brøderbund Software) –, the Long Now Foundation, faithful to the co-evolution concept. The latest challenge is his ecopragmatist manifesto: *Whole Earth Discipline*.

Keywords: Underground, Whole Earth Catalog, Co-evolution

GEOPOLITICS FOR ENERGY

The Pirates of the Horn of Africa, *Daniele Atzori*

Aim of this article is the analysis of the phenomenon of contemporary maritime piracy in the Horn of Africa, in order to criticise the hypothesis according to which pirates can be simply conceptualised as criminals, who thrive because of the presence of a «failed State». It will be here argued that pirates are actually engaged in building embryonic forms of State. Thus, the problem of piracy needs to be addressed in its historical, economic, social and moral complexity.

Keywords: Maritime Piracy, Horn of Africa

Europe's Geographical Space. A New Geopolitical Representation?, *Emanuele Frixia*

Putting the State on the map is an extraordinary ontological action. Cartography is the form representing modern political power through the territorial State. Geopolitical maps provide the way through which new forms of political power change the relation between spatial forms and its representation. In this regard the construction of the European Union is a clear

case of study conveying the making process of a supra-national space, and the progressive overlapping of that political space on the natural European geography.

Keywords: European Union, Geopolitical Maps

Understanding Turkey beyond Biases, Ödül Celep and Volkan Aytar

Turkey's recent foreign policy orientation has both been lauded and criticized. While some analysts argue that Turkey is on the way to become a regional power through its «multi-stakeholder» foreign policies, others suggest that the country is now sliding away from its EU membership course and pro-Western policy choices towards the «Islamic» camp, especially considering the recent tension with Israel and divergence from US's policy on Iran. This article aims to provide a more balanced picture through an examination of Turkey's history of domestic politics and foreign policy.

Keywords: Turkey, Foreign Policy, Biases

Siberia Below Zero, Francesco Maria Cannatà

Despite its wealth in terms of raw materials and exporting firms, Eastern Russia is having a difficult time. Ignored by El'tsin's presidency, Siberia is now drawing federal attention. Regional development relies on tax incentives and points to the Asian market. The first gas supplies to Beijing will take place in 2017. Negotiations are difficult. The Chinese position on the price of gas is unlikely to change, as the Chinese believe that the price of gas should be in line with the low cost domestic coal. There is a struggle for power in Moscow and among parliamentary lobbies for and against the Asian vector of Russian energy.

Keywords: Russia, Energy Policy

China's Path towards Democracy, *Min Zhang*

Do Chinese citizens have the right to vote? The answer to this question is not as simple as a «yes» or «no» since no country in the world has a population as large and diverse as China's and a history as complex as China's. Therefore, it is important to examine this issue from a historical perspective. Vote plays a core role in democracy and democracy is not just a process or a political formulation but rather a symbol and ideology. This article recalls how democracy was introduced in China over 100 years ago and was then adopted by the Communist Party to win the Civil War in the 1940s. It focuses on how democracy is applied nowadays under Socialism with a label of China's Characteristics.

Keywords: China, Democracy

ECONOMIC ARITHMETICS

A Map of Lights and Shadows, Laura Pellizzola

A recent debate in Italy has stressed the relevance of the so called «municipal capitalism», i.e. of the increasing presence of firms created and owned by local governments in various sectors. These firms are suspected of being ways on the one hand to by-pass constraints set by public finance laws on the municipalities' borrowing ability, and on the other hand to distort competition in sectors where local authorities are in charge of public regulation. The aim of this article (and more in depth of our book *Comuni S.p.A. Il Capitalismo Municipale in Italia*) is to identify direct and indirect holdings by local governments and to give evidence of their impact on economic activity (so far, purely descriptive and preliminary), and on their operating and financial performance.

Keywords: Municipal Capitalism, Economic Activity, Operating and Financial Performance

Natural Disasters and International Insurance Market Stability, *Roberto Casarin and Sergio Vergalli*

The frequency and intensity of natural catastrophic events are increasing worldwide also due to climate change. Their effects are not homogeneous among countries: although the costliest disasters generally occur in developed countries, low- and middle-income countries have experienced the largest costs for damage recovery (direct losses), in terms of annual average direct losses compared to GDP and in terms of number of victims per year. At the global level the gap between the different countries and the absence of an integrated insurance market has a negative impact on the risk diversification, the instability of the world insurance market and the economic growth. There are some remedies to these problems. In particular the developing countries are able to reduce their vulnerability, by facilitating disaster prevention risk management, increasing investments in prevention and preparedness, developing risk financing and catastrophe insurance programs. Among other remedies, the developed countries should increase risk financing and catastrophe insurance programs, also looking at the developed countries and with the involvement of international donor community, the World Bank and the other international financial institutions.

Keywords: Natural Catastrophes, Direct Losses, Insurance Programs

SUSTAINABLE READINGS

This Time is Different... or Maybe Not?, Marcella Nicolini

In their book *This Time is Different. Eight Centuries of Financial Folly*, leading economists Carmen Reinhart and Kenneth Rogoff argue that financial crises have occurred throughout history. Each time the experts have chimed, «this time is different», claiming that the new situation bears

little similarity to past disasters. Covering sixty-six countries across five continents, this volume guides us through eight centuries of financial missteps.

The Risk of Sliding Down a Slippery Slope, Maurizio Melis

In *Storms of My Grandchildren*, Dr. James Hansen, leading scientist on climate issues, paints a devastating but all-too-realistic picture of what will happen in the near future if we follow the course we are on. Although the threat of human-caused climate change is now widely recognized, politicians have failed to connect policy with the science, responding instead with remedies dictated by special interests.

Polar Attraction, Fabio Sferra

In *The Arctic Gold Rush: The New Race for Tomorrow's Natural Resources*, Roger Howard explores the political significance of the Arctic's vast untapped wealth of natural resources. The latest estimates are that the region holds around 13% of the world's undiscovered oil and as much as 30% of undiscovered natural gas reserves that would be hugely profitable for any country that managed to secure control over them. Gold, platinum, copper, and other precious metals have also been found along the coast. Games of political intrigue are being played out in the region as the world's resources become increasingly scarce and valuable.

Avoiding the Worst, Pasquale Alferj

Aside from finding the specific causes of climate change, the global community is challenged with preventing ecological catastrophes from destroying established communities. In his book *Les guerres du climat*, social psychologist Harald Welzer argues that climate change has led to increasingly adverse living conditions across the globe and that these living condi-

tions are contributing to economic and social catastrophes, civil wars, and growing refugee populations.

Exiled Migrants, *Daniele Atzori*

The movie *Exils* (2004) by the French director Tony Gatlif deals with the experience of social and cultural alienation encountered by a couple of French Algerians who make an adventurous trip from France to Algeria. The film raises questions about the identity crisis of the migrants, at the same time as illustrating the social and economic difficulties involved in the process of migration. The «exile» which, according to Gatlif, frames their experience as migrants, seems to be overcome through the overwhelming, primordial and liberating power of the irrational.