

The EU rescue package extended to Ireland at the end of 2010 is a painful reminder that, notwithstanding a series of positive economic data, especially in Germany, the global financial and economic crisis is far from over. The severe austerity programs imposed in countries such as Greece and Portugal have triggered violent protests and could, as necessary as they are, give rise in the long term to social upheaval. The floundering US economy and the clashes between the USA and France, on the one hand, and China and Germany, on the other, concerning the export surpluses of the latter two countries, not to mention discussions on a new world monetary order, make it clear that we are far from out of the woods yet. And what goes for the world economy also goes for world politics; indeed, the two are inseparably linked. During the 2007–2008 crisis, the G20 – the 20 largest economies in the world – seized the initiative after the responsible international organizations – above all the International Monetary Fund – had both failed to anticipate the crisis and proved incapable of acting quickly and effectively when it erupted. Does that mean that we are heading for a form of world government? Probably not, although the growing significance of the G20 signals something of a return to intergovernmental as opposed to multilateral action, as also illustrated by the Euro crisis within the framework of the EU.

These two aspects are explored in detail in this issue of *INTERNATIONAL POLITICS AND SOCIETY* by *Hanns W. Maull* and *Melanie Morisse-Schilbach*, continuing the debate on the various facets of the global crisis in this journal, following on from Thomas Palley, Sebastian Dullien and Adalbert Winkler in the 1/2010 issue. For Maull, the pattern of the current global crisis is paradigmatic for the future of international relations. We are a long way off from an effective global government. Far from it: Maull declares that the normal state of politics in the era of globalization is one of »impotence,« shared by governments and individual political actors alike. His recipe for a »smart« foreign policy under these circumstances is to seek out effective and sustainable strategies for multilateral cooperation in order to be able to cope with the risks exemplified by the crisis, but also to take advantage of opportunities. Morisse-Schilbach regards Germany as well on the way – unfortunately – to losing its current role of »beneficent economic hegemon« in Europe, which virtually fell into its lap after World War II, ceded to it by the victorious powers. Berlin's unilateral approach to Greece and the Euro crisis is jeopardizing this role because the German government has no vision of monetary Europe and no notion of what leadership of the common currency area means.

Hans-Jochen Lulmann rounds off this brief focus on the crisis with a review essay in which he analyses some recent books which, from various standpoints, seek to clarify whether financial crashes are predictable.

In part two of this issue we look at aspects of the security of Europe as a whole and Russia's security interests, thereby linking up with the debate in issue 2/2010 with its contributions from Rolf Mützenich, Sergei Kortunov, Peter W. Schulze and Igor Jurgens/Yevgeny Gontmacher. NATO's autumn summit in Lisbon and the meeting with Russian President Medvedev have gone some way towards softening positions on both sides and closer cooperation between the West and Russia appears within grasp. These questions are addressed by *Hans-Joachim Spanger*, who regards Russia's new willingness to open up as a result not only of President Obama's »reset,« but above all of President Medvedev's aspirations with regard to modernization, which require a certain amount of external openness. This also explains the Russian President's proposed »European Security Treaty.« Spanger calls on the West – and Germany in particular – to respond much more constructively than in the past to Russian initiatives of this kind. One aspect which has put relations between Russia and the West under considerable strain in recent years is the »Five-Day War« between Russia and Georgia in summer 2008. This, according to *Johannes Wetzinger*, can be traced back to a major gamble by Georgian President Sakashvili, who evidently misread the level of US support he would be able to count on. Since then, although there have been a number of initiatives to improve relations between Russia and Georgia, they are unlikely, according to the author, to meet with much success during what remains of President Sakashvili's term of office: the positions of Moscow and Tbilisi remain entrenched and there is no prospect of improvement.

Two other contributions in this issue deal with various aspects of international combat missions. In his article on Afghanistan *Karsten Jung* comes to the sobering conclusion that another year – 2010 – has ended with little to show. Stability and security could not be achieved for the Afghan people and initiatives to engage the Taliban in dialogue came to nothing. The author attributes this to the fact that (Western) governments did not keep their promises and clarity is lacking with regard to aims and strategy. Afghanistan also features in *Gerda Axer-Dämmer's* contribution, although only to the extent that, at the moment, it is the German army's main combat mission. The author's principal focus is the extent to which such combat missions compromise the ideal of the

»citizen soldier« and a civilian »citizens' army.« There is an increasing divide between the military and civil society in Germany, reinforced by the benign indifference of the latter.

A very different topic is taken up, provocatively, by *Gerd Ganteför*: he suggests that population growth is a greater danger for the future of humankind than climate change and demands, accordingly, that affordable fossil fuels should be made available to poor developing countries for the foreseeable future because this is the only way they can attain the prosperity needed to curb population growth. In this way, a smaller world population would ameliorate climate change much more quickly and decisively than (expensive) renewable energies could. This is indeed a provocative thesis, which will certainly arouse some opposition: we would be delighted to publish a response to Ganteför in the next issue of IPG.

Finally, *Robert Chr. van Ooyen* presents a commentary on immigration, posing the thesis that what is important in this respect is not integration, but participation. The author believes that this could be achieved by granting foreigners the right to vote in elections in the form of a human right within the framework of a liberal theory of popular sovereignty.