



EDITORIAL

We live in a world saddled with crises on every side. It was once thought that with advancement in technology, most of human problems will gradually disappear. Unfortunately, the reverse appears to be the case as emerging unforeseen challenges erupt from unexpected quarters, adding to the already existing challenges. Syria is yet to recover from a fourteen-year civil war which has claimed over half a million lives, courtesy of the Assad's totalitarian posture. Even with Assad gone, the new regime led by former militia lords is yet to unify divergent interests of various militia groups who may not fully align with the ideals of the group currently holding power. The Russo-Ukrainian face-off which started with the annexation of Crimea by Russia in February 2014 and culminated in a full scale war in February 2022 shows no sign of abatement even with the concerted efforts of the United States. Russia knows that with the several distractive and controversial policies being pushed by the United States' Government, they can get away with a couple of offensives against Ukraine in the meantime. Besides, this might be a calculated ploy to wield more force during negotiations. In the Middle East, Israel and Hamas are still locked in a brutal war that has claimed over fifty thousand lives and still counting. Several other countries are grappling with internal conflicts which are likely to snowball into full scale wars if not properly managed. However, there is another type of conflict that has taken the global center stage and has sent economic shock waves across continents. President Trump's infatuation with a trade war with everyone has rattled many countries and even Americans themselves. While the tariffs imposed on Chinese goods might be construed as an attempt to stall China's growing global influence and rivalry with America, it is difficult to pinpoint the motive behind slamming strong allies with such adversarial policies. Initially, one would have thought that Donald Trump just wanted to make more favourable deals to "make America great again", but the increasing gusto and unabating vigour with which he has pursued this agenda makes one wonder if it is just about the "Art of dealmaking" or if there is something else. Trump has claimed that this move will help rejuvenate the US local manufacturing sector, but he recently bragged about how much revenue (\$ 2bn daily) will accrue to the United States from the tariffs. One is then left to wonder if this is all about money. There is no doubt that this will definitely make America rich again, but "great again"? Let's watch and see. However, it is necessary to look beyond the money and consider the

far reaching implications of this both for the United States and other countries. The relationships between the US and affected ally countries are already strained and might lead to depletion of loyalty and subsequent re-alignment. Seeing that this trade war has generated intense emotions among world leaders, it is not unlikely that alliances might change over time, and the United State might make more money but lose more important allies. The United States is fighting everybody and seems to be winning, but for how long? What is even more intriguing the United States' squeezing the balls of her allies while unrelentingly chasing after former adversaries like a desperate lover. It seems Donald Trump does not believe in the old proverb – “A bird at hand is worth more than a hundred in the bush”. And I would like to argue that a hundred birds at hand are worth more than two at large. Another important dimension to the entire impasse, though of less interest to the United States, is the impact of this trade war on the African continent. The effect of this whole muscle flexing will trickle down to the average African in the form increased costs of goods, high cost of medicare an further reduced standard of living giving that most items used in Africa are imported from other continents. Yes, there are a few exports, but these are mainly primary products which will absorb the tariff if exported to America and then return as finished products at a higher cost to be borne by Africans. Some African countries have “retaliated” with their own tariffs on American products. But is this really the right thing to do? I doubt because these tariffs will also be transferred to the citizens, thus impoverishing them further. I think that this “retaliation” is a self-defeatist empty braggadocios stance which will hurt the continent much more that it will the United States. I dare say that only countries that have reasonable international trade volume of finished products can engage in this ego tussle. Africa is far from that position and her leaders can do with some modicum of humility. I believe that African leaders are only in a position to “softly negotiate”. I know that many African leaders do not read, but I guess they will learn a thing or two if they will buy or borrow a copy of “The art of dealmaking” by Donald J. Trump. Alternatively, they can go back to the drawing board and develop strategies for developing their countries so they can be more relevant and competitive in a world that is becoming increasingly intolerant to the weak.

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