In Summary

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There is a serious global realignment taking place with most countries trying to find out where they fit in the new realities.

International Criminal Court's chief prosecutor Fatou Bensouda speaking after her swearing-in ceremony as the new chief prosecutor in The Hague on June 15, 2012. Kenya is in the forefront of demanding structural and philosophical reforms in the ICC. PHOTO | AFP
The Trump election victory, and the likely decline in “messianism”, is pleasing to countries that wanted to see Obama’s back.

Some countries are reorganising themselves, others are being reorganised, and a third group is caught in between.

It is happening to powerful countries like the United States, China, Russia, Britain, Japan, Germany and France as well as to medium size powerhouses like Brazil, Turkey, India, South Africa, Iran, Israel and Mexico.

It is also there in small and increasingly assertive countries that include the Philippines whose President Rodrigo Duterte uses what US President Barack Obama termed “colourful language”.

It is in the category of small assertive countries that Kenya finds itself in, fending off internal and external distractions.

In the evolving realignment, institutions that were previously held in high regard will increase their irrelevance mainly because the powerful and the assertive countries have been losing faith in them.

In part, this is because those institutions allowed themselves to be misused to promote the geopolitical interests of some powers in fixing purported rivals or imposing controls on those who should remain as client states.

Among institutions with diminishing relevance are the United Nations and the International Criminal Court.

While Kenya has not questioned the relevance of the UN, it has expressed serious doubts as to the value of the ICC in its current form.

Kenya is in the forefront of demanding structural and philosophical reforms in the ICC.

HYPOCRITES

Among those that control the UN and the ICC is America, and other members of the UN Security Council, particularly the five permanent members, and yet they least respect those institutions.

They make laws for others to follow, but not to bind themselves when their perceived interests are at stake.

They actually believe that, and behave as if, they have natural rights to violate “international law” when it is in conflict with their perceived “national interests” and they should not be held to account.

The US, in particular, is good at making the case for ignoring, and exempting Americans from the obligations of “international law”.

This is likely to increase with the incoming Donald Trump administration for he has already made it clear that he has no respect for agreements on climate change.

Trump will be a force of global realignment as he tries to “Make America Great Again” with his passionate dislike for many things linked to Obama/Hillary Clinton.

Global “messianism” is one of the Obama/Clinton signatures which imply that the Trump team would be inward looking.

This would mean less interventionism in the affairs of other countries and that he would seek to disengage globally except where American vital interests are concerned.

The Trump election victory, and the likely decline in “messianism”, is pleasing to countries that wanted to see Obama’s back.

Duterte of Manila considers Trump to be a soul mate in cursing and is so pleased that he is reconsidering his plan to jettison the American military from the Philippines.

TRUMP EFFECT

Vladmir Putin in Moscow will not have to worry much about Euro hostility while he rebuilds Russia’s global status.

Trump has made it clear he has no quarrel with the Russians.

Benjamin Netanyahu in Tel Aviv believes that Obama betrayed Israel and is elated Trump won.
Trump recognises Jerusalem as the eternal capital of Israel, condemns the UN for reprimanding Israel for constructing settlements in the West Bank, and does not like Muslims.

For Trump, there is a need to recast everything because he seemingly believes, the Obama/Clinton “messianism” had led to disasters in Libya and Syria that eroded America’s global stature.

This was in contrast with China which emerged as the global economic engine, with minimal geopolitical and economic costs, to its standing.

Instead, with the US owing China trillions of dollars, the Chinese world standing has been rising in proportion to the decline of the West.

This is not by accident. As American thinkers and policy makers got themselves lost in the “messianism” and preparing for “clashes of civilisation”, only a few thinkers like John Mersheimer of Chicago kept on insisting that China was the real challenge to American power.

KENYA’S PLACE

While not ignoring the supposed Islamic threats, Trump seems to have come round to the Mersheimer argument which explains the focus on China in the new global realignment.

Kenya fits right in the midst of that realignment. It is doing its best as one of the small but assertive zonal powerhouses.

It was temporarily caught up in the Obama euphoria but has since come out of the stupor.

It can entrench its global interests by dealing realistically with all the other players of which Trump is only one, albeit an important one.

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