

## **A Word from the Editor-in-Chief: Religious Wars in XXI century – A Challenge for Politology of Religion**

**Miroljub Jevtić<sup>1</sup>**   
*University of Belgrade*  
*Serbia*

Since its foundation, Euro-American Political Science has accepted the assumption that religion would decline and eventually vanish due to secularization processes. Consequently, it accepted the notion that religion as a cause, challenge or even a cooperative force in armed conflicts and wars would vanish. However, the reality quickly challenged this assumption.

First of all, religion did not decline. Contrary to this, religion has strengthened. The idea that religion would eventually vanish was mainly based on the insights from Europe, and particularly from intellectual and leftists' circles in USA. Typical example of this is Peter Berger. His predictions on religion made a significant negative mark on his career and reputation, because he was not only a sociologist of religion, but also a theologian. He, and many of his colleagues, predicted a religious decline based on examples from both Europe and USA. They employed Eurocentric approach which mattered only for the West, thus making a huge damage to the science by claiming things that were not correct. The damage they made was not only important in the field of science, but also for the Western societies. Their false conclusions tricked politicians, who made political decisions that made a significant damage not only to the Western societies, but also to the humanity in general.

Berger and his colleagues observed the religious decline in Europe, and claimed that similar processes will influence all religions. Their approach shows that they did not know the teachings of world's religions well. They based their conclusions on Christianity, and particularly Western Christianity, and not Orthodox Christianity. Moreover, most of these scholars were at the same time atheists, and they did not bother to know Western Christianity better. The results of such approach is fatal for the whole world.

They simply refused to see the fact that, even though Christianity was in

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<sup>1</sup> Founder and editor-in-chief of *Politics and Religion Journal*. At the moment, prof. Jevtic serves as an Ambassador of Serbia in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Contact E-mail: [jevticmiroljub@yahoo.com](mailto:jevticmiroljub@yahoo.com)

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decline, Islam was not. Contrary to this, Islam is getting stronger. They also refused to see how Judaism in Israel suppressed the seculars Jews, or the rise of Hinduism and its suppression of secular ideas. The same happened with Orthodox Christianity.

Consequently, they failed to see and predict how religion will become a serious source of armed conflicts. They did not predict that their own societies will not experience the decline of religion - only the change in dominant religious practices. They saw the decline of Christianity, but not the rise of Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism... That is who religion is not declining, but rather the dominant religion are changing places on the same territories. This fact is particularly important in current armed conflicts in the world: the wars in Gaza and Ukraine are typical examples of this. Also, the conflict between China and USA - which fortunately is not still the armed conflict - is basically the conflict about values, and those values are based in religion.

Let us take a closer look into the armed conflict in Gaza, or in the Middle East in general, that started on October 7, 2023. Who participate in this conflict? From one side it is Hamas and Islamic jihad, whose names already tell us that these are religiously-oriented movements. The very name of Hamas's action "Deluge of Al-Aqsa" is very clear about its intentions. On the other side, Israel at this moment is run by the government which includes the most religious actors since the formation of the state. Their political vision is based on the Bible, and claim that Jews has the right to form their state in Palestine.

On the other side, someone might ask why Ukraine? Are we not talking about two Orthodox Christian nations? Formally yes, but in essence - no. Ukrainians are predominately Orthodox Christians, but people who are in charge for the Ukrainian politics since 2014 are under a direct influence of Greek-catholics and Catholics. These two groups are in control of Ukrainian political space and they see the Orthodox Church related to Russia as the main enemy. That is why they try their best to cut ties between Ukrainian Orthodox Christians from the Russian Orthodox Church. Moreover, they formed the Ukrainian Orthodox Church with a goal to completely destroy the infrastructure of the Russian Orthodox Church. What is even more important, these people are bringing back the conflicts from 16th, 17th and 18th century into the 21st century; the very conflict in Ukraine that was between Roman Catholic Church - back in the time under a complete control of the Vatican - and the Russian Orthodox Church. Today, paradoxically but correct at the same time, this conflict is no longer run by the Vatican as it does not want to engage in a conflict with Russian Orthodoxy. That is why the conflict in Ukraine can be understood as a way of

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action against the Vatican, actions that are led by Ukrainian Greek-Catholics and nominal Catholics.

Third example that we have mentioned is the potential conflict over Taiwan. Although no one is mentioning religion, it is clear that this conflict is actually a conflict over values. From one side there is a China, with a system that is nominally secular but under a great influence of Confucianism and its norm and values, and on the other side there is westernized Taiwan. Taiwan, with the support from secular USA, is challenging and confronting the dominant values system in China.