

Nicola Muraro, “The Trump Doctrine That Opens the World to Chaos”, *Il Giornale di Vicenza*, 21 December 2025.

The new National Security Strategy (NSS) of the United States marks a profound shift in American foreign policy. It is not, however, the multilateral turn that some commentators claim to see. On the contrary, the document replaces the primacy of law and shared rules with a renewed emphasis on power, exercised in forms that are less visible but no less effective.

In a recent article in *Corriere della Sera* (10 December), Carlo Rovelli correctly observes that the West no longer dominates the world as it did after the Second World War or during the post-Cold War era. Yet the conclusion he draws is debatable. The new American strategy is not an opening towards multilateralism, but a reorganisation of power dynamics.

The NSS acknowledges the limits of permanent military intervention, but it does not abandon the use of force. Instead, it extends it into economic, technological, financial and regulatory domains, making conflict structural and continuous, spread across multiple levels that directly affect the economic and political life of allied and competing states.

The language used throughout the document is revealing. Terms such as *sole-source*, *push out* and *leverage* are not mere technical expressions. They point to a strategy built on dependence, exclusion and asymmetric relationships: not cooperation among equals, but subordination.

This is explicit unilateralism, founded on the systematic use of power imbalances and grounded in the idea that the national security of the United States alone provides legitimacy — disregarding international law. It stands in stark contrast to multilateralism based on shared rules.

Within this framework, freedom risks becoming an empty shell: still proclaimed, but hollowed out as the material conditions that sustain it are gradually eroded. Independent thinking, or pursuing one’s own political or cultural course, becomes increasingly costly.

What is striking, therefore, is the reaction of those in Europe who applaud the NSS’s criticism of the European Union. Such applause is short-sighted. Those criticisms do not seek to strengthen individual states, but to weaken Europe as a political entity — making each state more easily subordinated once the collective strength of the whole is lost.

Rovelli underestimates the radical nature of this shift. Europe and the United States under a Trump administration would no longer constitute a Western political community grounded in common rules and values. Europe and “the West” coincide less and less.

By rightly criticising military imperialism and the ideological use of the term “democracy”, he overlooks a deeper transformation towards a competitive order, where no alliance is stable and power — military, economic, technological — becomes the main guarantor of security.

The new American strategy outlines a world of unstable alliances and selective dominance. A world that does not reduce conflict, but renders it continuous. And if international law and institutions are delegitimised, who is left to regulate such conflicts?

This is an openly Hobbesian vision: a war of all against all, in which even the strongest may fall when others combine against them. If all powers adopt this logic, the outcome is not order but permanent competitive chaos.

To label this as “realism” is misleading. Hobbes himself recognised that only common rules could prevent generalised violence. Without law, power does not create stability; it produces endless conflict.

Dismissing the value of law and shared institutions does not lead to a simpler or safer world. Instead, it accepts a system of continuous conflict, devoid of safeguards, where power determines everything and peace becomes merely a temporary pause between crises.

For Europe — built on rules and interdependence — accepting a subordinate role is not an option. As Draghi and Letta argue, the European Union must be transformed from a regulated space into a civil and political power, through investment in innovative technologies, financial integration, a genuine common defence and majority decision-making.

Only then can Europe become the cornerstone of a truly multilateral approach, founded on international cooperation and respect for law — a prospect opposed to the rule of the strongest.