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Brazil, the Blue Economy and the maritime security of the South Atlantic

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ABSTRACT

This paper points out that the Brazilian emerging maritime approach is a remarkable change in its post-Cold War era's defence policy. The constraints of the US regional hegemony in the American continent resulted in a reactive defence policy throughout the twentieth century and its division from Brazilian foreign policy. Although the regional systemic conditions of powers remain in the twenty-first century, the 'Atlantic energy renaissance' promises to burst Brazilian social-economic development. Because the emerging Southern Atlantic Blue Economy is an event of global impact, Brazil is proactive to an expected growing contest for energy and resources in the region. That explains the institutional reforms in the Brazilian armed forces, the emphasis on coastal defence, the new agenda for West Africa, and the new push in the Zone for Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic. This offers a historical background of that change, assesses its main aspects and challenges, and concludes with some recommendations.

KEYWORDS

Brazilian defence policy;
Brazilian foreign policy;
maritime security; South
Atlantic; offshore exploration

Introduction¹

Brazil has a coastline of over 7400 km in length, and an area of jurisdictional waters extending into the ocean that – adding the Territorial Sea, Contiguous Zone and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) – goes beyond 3.4 million square kilometres. Not surprisingly, for a country with such characteristics, the ocean represents a dominant factor for national development.

A perspective of Brazilian contemporary history is its struggle against limited energy resources and its negative macroeconomic consequences (Stratfor, 2012). Since 2006, Brazil has become self-sufficient in oil production from sea deposits.² This is the same period when Brazil's economy achieved maturity and when Brazilian foreign policy began sustaining effective extra-regional reach. Moreover, based on the estimates of pre-salt deposits in the South Atlantic – and the related technologies and political achievements they shall provide – the political leadership considers them a 'golden ticket' for Brazilian economic and social development. The Federal Government expects the new deposits to increase the total reserves of the country from 14 billion barrels to almost 38 billion barrels. This would be with a daily production reaching 3.8 million barrels by 2020 (Petrobras, 2014). The Brazilian Navy commonly addresses the size and wealth of

Brazilian waters as the country's 'Blue Amazon'. Thus, does Brazil consider that the ocean shall foster the Brazilian development towards a Golden Age.

However, the new oil deposits are beyond the limits of 200 nautical miles. For this reason, the country made a request to the Commission for the Limits of the Continental Shelf of the United Nations (UN) in 2004 for extension of the continental shelf and consequently its EEZ. The UN, in 2007, expressed its opposition to this extension and recommended a rewording of the proposal. In 2010, Brazil in anticipation of the final decision established unilaterally the limits of its jurisdictional waters in accordance with the 2004 request to the UN, expanding by approximately 900 thousand square kilometres its limit, and ensuring possession of any resources from and beneath the area (Martins, 2010). Later, the UN accepted 81% of the areas subject to extension and the remaining are still awaiting a final decision (Marroni, 2013).

This has not gone unnoticed by the Brazilian public. The Institute of Economic and Applied Research's (IPEA's) assessment on National Defence points out that 63% of the Brazilian population reasonably considers the possibility that in the coming 20 years, Brazil could be the target of foreign invasion as a result of the pre-salt resources, while only 34.3% do not believe in this notion (IPEA, 2012, p. 7).³

Moreover, one has to consider that the Brazilian resource trend is a major factor in the transitional map of global energy flows. The 'Atlantic energy renaissance' is undergoing three structural changes. First, the 'shale revolution' has made the USA the world's leading producer of oil since 2014 with the expectation that it will become the world's leading producer of natural gas by 2017. Second, the 'deep-water offshore boom' in the South Atlantic started by Brazil extends to Angola and Nigeria, and shall embrace Uruguay, Argentina, Guyana, Namibia and Morocco, among other southern basin countries. Consequently, the region became the first area of investment in offshore hydrocarbons in 2011. Third, the transformation of the region in the future as a major global energy exporter is based on the fact that the 'first full blooming of the low carbon revolution has unfolded within the Atlantic Basin, where two-thirds of renewable energy generation now takes place and where a similar share of global installed renewable capacity is currently located' (Isbell, 2014).

This new Atlantic energy 'Eldorado' is already pressing the traditional and emerging powers – especially from the European Union (EU) and Asia Pacific – to implement new maritime security policies in order to guarantee safe passage of oil, gas and the related increasing market that they shall involve. The UK's 2014 Maritime Security Strategy affirms 'many coastal States do not have the capacity to govern their maritime zones effectively'. Yet, it mentions only the oil producers of West Africa as main areas of concern (United Kingdom, 2014, p. 57). The G-7 Declaration of 15 April 2015 is comprehensive and mentions the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Operations Ocean Shield and Active Endeavour and the EU Naval Force Operation Atalanta as operational models for the provision of security in the Gulf of Guinea (G-7, 2015, pp. 1–2). However, it is important to note that the South Atlantic stands as the lowest priority area of concern in United States Maritime Security Strategy (2015, p. 18).

This context explains much of the reason for the emerging Brazilian policy for the South Atlantic as one of the most important topics on the international agenda (Brunelle, 2012; Visentini, 2012). The most important aspect is that Brazil is not simply reviewing or adjusting former foreign and defence policies. Motivated by the new energy boom in the South Atlantic, Brazil is advancing a comprehensive maritime security policy.

Brazil's intent is to offer a regional plan of action for development and security in the South Atlantic so that the surrounding countries can be active players in spite of extra-regional initiatives. In this sense, from a Brazilian perspective, there is competition for a leading role in the region resulting from post-Cold War US foreign and security policies mainly focused on the Persian Gulf and Pacific Ocean. This severs Brazilian decision-making's trade-offs between Brasilia's traditional foreign and security policies, which gravitated in favour of countering US influence and a brand new sustainable and engaging grand strategy that articulates awareness of other South American and West African countries.

A landmark of this new Brazilian maritime perspective is the 2013 *Montevideo Declaration*. The summit of foreign ministers of the twenty-four members of the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic (ZPCSA) presented a plan for cooperative action on: mapping and exploration of the seabed; maritime environment; air and maritime transportation and port security; maritime safety and security; coastal defence and peacekeeping operations; public security and combating transnational organised crime; and capacity-building in trade, culture, science and technology. Furthermore, Brazil also introduced itself as a provider of naval consultancy, training and exercises to West African countries and it has played an important role in the designing and planning of the new centre for inter-regional maritime operations of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Cameroon. In order to uphold those commitments and aims, important institutional reviews go on in Brazil's defence ministry.

Thus, this paper aims to address the context and the impact of this new Brazilian maritime perspective. In order to access the perils and potentials of this maritime turning point it is necessary to review Itamaraty's foreign and defence policies. It is also relevant to approach the institutional thresholds of Brazilian security transformation.

First, any consideration of contemporary international security has to factor in the primacy of the USA in world security affairs as constituting the framework of our present global geopolitical reality. This is especially due to how this position derives from America's status as the sole global hegemon and as the regional hegemon in the Americas and how this informs the central issue for Brazilian emerging maritime policy. Second, an analysis of American power extends into outlining Brazilian foreign and defence policies during the twentieth century, revisiting events that drove changes in Brazil's bilateral relations with Washington as well as its pursuit of a new and autonomous track in the twenty-first century. Third, addressed is the emergence of the South Atlantic 'Blue Economy' as the cornerstone of a new orientation and, for the first time, synergetic, foreign and defence policies between Brazilian Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence and among the armed forces. As result, Brazil elaborated a new agenda and hierarchy of priorities reflecting a new security policy in which the South Atlantic stands at the apex of an autonomous South American region and sanctuary for Brazilian development. Fourth, it addresses the Brazilian initiative's main recommendations on how to deal with some of them.

The American power factor⁴

To understand Brazil's current ambitions for the South Atlantic, it is important to consider a strategic analysis of the Western hemisphere for most of its history. This conformed to two

political conditions of Brazilian maritime and security, policy: first, it granted hierarchy to the US security agenda; second, it motivated a continuous struggle for an autonomous path of development. While the first seems nowadays ambiguous, and several beholders point it is fading away, the second one has changed dramatically. Both of them define Brazil's emerging maritime policy.

Although its superior wealth has prevailed unchallenged from the ending of the nineteenth century, the USA built its military hegemony during the twentieth. After the end of the Cold War and through the twenty-first century, the USA is still more powerful than any number of the remaining great powers. This is the defining characteristic of the current international system.⁵ This sort of hegemony has favoured three patterns of US foreign policy with general political consequences to the Americas and other regions.

First, the USA has been reactive against any insertion in the Americas of an extra-continental great power. That became the American geopolitical posture after expelling Spain from the Caribbean in 1898 and by the UK's consent to the Monroe Doctrine in 1900. The USA reacted against German special relationships with Latin American countries during the 1930s and the Soviet bid for a permanent nuclear stronghold in Cuba. This almost carried the world to Armageddon in 1962 (Mearsheimer, 2003, Chapter 7).

Second, the USA has interposed against any great change in the distribution of power in the Americas. This reaction has been proportional to the proximity of the sub-regional system to the Contiguous US (CONUS). On the one hand, since the American Revolutionary War, the Caribbean basin has been the southern maritime boundary of the USA. Consequently, America's presence in Central America and the Caribbean was regularly served of interventions. This started well before it achieved regional hegemony (Scheina, 2003, Chapters 20 and 38). The status of the US 'protectorate' of several Central American countries from the Spanish-American War to the Banana Wars in the 1920s and 1940s downgraded most of the local armed forces to constabulary roles. Those countries' lack of material means and America's excess of it explain the lower expectation of wars in that sub-region as well as the great defence acquisitions.

In another respect, the US presence and involvement in South America has existed since the late 1890s, but it became stronger as a result of its global ascendancy in the 1940s. The US involvement in Brazil's domestic politics started with the Revolution of 1893–1894 (Scheina, 2003, Chapter 37). The relevance of South American strategic resources became elevated in the Second World War. One cannot ignore the dual purpose of US bases in the Brazilian Northeast as intermediary to the war effort in North Africa, serving as a negative incentive to South American alignment to the Axis Powers. Consequently, during the first half of the twentieth century, aggressions and rivalries were recurrent among South American countries. Several of them, including Brazil, considered producing the means of a great power: large armies by universal and compulsory conscription, acquisition of big battleships and air fighters from Europe (Martins Filho, 2010) and even the development of nuclear projects. Progressive to the US ascendancy, South American countries' pursuit of military power was constrained after the Second War (Brigagão & Proença Júnior, 2002).

Once again, in anticipation and preparation for the Third World War in the 1950s, the Korean War became the great case of US asymmetric and aggressive diplomacy within South America (Cervo & Bueno, 2002; Hirst, 2003, 2004). The US offensives against

extra- and intra-regional communist threats and interposition against regional instability in Latin America amounted virtually to the same thing.

In the case of Brazil during that period, it simply seconded America's hemispheric and international agendas. From the 1950s to the 1970s, the USA re-established the Second World War partnership with Brazil in subservient status. In the episodic case of rebellion against it by the initiative of an Independent Foreign Policy (*Política Externa Independente* – PEI), Washington's reaction was severe and an interventionist posture was adopted in the South Atlantic. The pressure was high throughout South America and other parts of the Third World while the US administrations set the containment of socialism over the containment of the Soviet Union (Friedman, 1999; Pecequillo, 2001). Third, in securing global hegemony the USA has pre-emptively balanced and/or disarmed every potential regionally hegemonic state in Europe and Asia. The USA pursued that agenda, firstly, in the Great War in Europe and then systematically against Germany, Japan and the Soviet Union's bids (Mearsheimer, 2003, Chapter 7).

Brazilian foreign and defence policies in the twentieth century

A grasp of American power suggests systemic constraints to all other national foreign policies in the Americas. The hegemonic concentration of real capabilities by the USA discouraged any great gains of power since the beginning of the twentieth century. In South America, Brazil's continuous superior development in its potential and real power over its peers in the last 30 years has, however, determined sub-regional distributions of power. During that period, South America enjoyed the most stable political framework and Brazil its highest rates of development in its history. More recently, while the USA has been deeply engaged in the Persian Gulf, South Asia and the Pacific, Brazil has started promoting initiatives in favour of a more integrated and autonomous South America. This now expands into embracing the South Atlantic. To understand the trade-offs and discontinuity of Brazil's emerging maritime policy, it is necessary to step back and consider its historical goals and constraints.

The US hegemonic agenda has set two parameters for all other American countries' foreign and defence policies. First, the USA has guaranteed protection against any military action in the Americas by an extra-continental great power. In the last century, among wars registered in the Americas among continental states, the Anglo-Argentinean war was the sole case of extra-continental interposition. It was allowed by the USA. As a consequence, the defence costs of American states dropped to very low rates because there was no expectation of an American state facing a great power in the medium term. This aspect has been a critical one to all American states' foreign and defence policies.

Second, there is a very limited scope for offensive military operations among American states in pursuit of security and self-interests. The conduct of military actions incurring protestations from other American countries shall rarely follow without any US reaction. Independently, the political goal of those conducting such wars can result in great alterations of power which could threaten the hegemonic condition, if not America's immediate self-interest. By sustaining the hegemonic condition, the USA has constrained other American countries' conversion of shares of their national resources to low rates of real offensive power. They did not build up large ground troops to face unlimited wars⁶ and every nuclear initiative linked to a great power project has dropped away (Brigagão &

Proença Júnior, 2002). Ultimately, American power has favoured Brazil as it presented three geopolitical advantages that made its sovereignty one of the most secure in the world (Proença Júnior & Diniz, 2008).

First, Brazil consolidated its position as the strongest South American state in terms of power potential. It always had the largest population, territory and natural resource assets. Since the 1970s, it has promoted the most successful process of industrialisation in the region. Therefore, Brazil has greater potential to convert social resources into military means than all nearby states. Second, Brazil has a geographical advantage. Its areas of highest value lie far away from land frontiers and can be threatened only by sea. An exception is the region of the Mato Grosso in a potential context of Bolivian domestic meltdown. Even so, continuously since the 1970s, and particularly in the last 10 years, Brazil has been able to lay down the strongest army among the Southern Cone countries. This has been the case though it is small in comparison to the standards of other regional powers. But it has facilitated regional deterrence and stabilization.

Third, America's regional hegemony has favoured Brazil's outstanding sub-regional position since the USA is likely to interpose against any South American collision strong enough to change radically the sub-system of power. These three factors ensure that Brazil will be capable of entertaining relatively lower investments on its security in relation to any other South American state and possible contender. Any Brazilian military officer is able to present figures on how inferior Brazil's defence budget per gross national product is in relation to that of its neighbours and others countries of equivalent size or wealth as Brazil.⁷ In fact, the Brazilian perspective of threat has been so reduced and its potential power so superior over its neighbours that it accepts an extremely narrow amount of available military force in readiness. The clearest example is Brazil's air force new fighter acquisition programme where the decision was one of postponement for 15 years. No other country in the world at the same status as Brazil could entertain not defending its air sovereignty. Proença Júnior and Diniz (2008) point out this condition of a 'security-free rider'.⁸

The US-Brazil breakdown and the search for a new security framework

Due to its own socio-economic shortcomings, and a particular emulation of US military primacy during the twentieth century, Brazil always associated military acquisition with national projects of development even currently during the Dilma Rousseff administration. In the early twentieth century, Brazil acquired two *Dreadnoughts*, and in 2013, it decided in favour of the Swedish Saab's Gripen Next Generation air fighters, while both weapons systems were/are still prototypes (Martins Filho, 2010; Vucetic & Duarte, 2015). Both decisions related to long-term programmes for development of, respectively, civilian naval and aerospace industries than purely for purposes of military build-up. Even so, that Brazilian credo was the reason for US-Brazil's breakdown in the 1970s and is still the issue for the amicable but cold relations until the present day (Perruci, 1995).

During the twentieth century, when it envisioned much more explicitly great power aspirations, Brazil searched for a clear bandwagon strategy or security understanding in its rapprochement with the USA (Lake, 2011). The peak of that strategy was set in 1942, after a decade of collecting gains by swinging positions and agreements between the USA and Germany in the 1930s (Moura, 1980). Brazilian alignment to the USA in the

Second World War was a watershed for Brazil and South America (Mott, 2002, pp. 91–92) because it confirmed the region's subordination to US regional hegemony (Duarte, 2011). The US-Brazil treaty of 1942 followed tough negotiations, which, for the Brazilian public, marked an illusionary ascendancy. Brazil, which was granted air and naval bases in the Northeast, performed an operational role in joint patrolling of the South Atlantic against German submarine activities and agreed to the USA being the only buyer of strategic materials. This set a pattern for the rest of the region (denying the Germans the same access). Brazil demanded support for its industrialisation, modernisation of ground and naval forces, and creation of its air force while joining the Italian campaign between 1943 and 1945. All those demands addressed Brazil's strategy for great power status, but they were concessions the USA would never make again.

Following that, the military regime assumed power and modernisation became a priority with technology transference being the path to it. After stabilisation of the new regime and a period of economic surplus, in 1968 the Artur da Costa e Silva administration launched the country's first Strategic Development associated with a National Fund of Technological and Scientific Development. Under the following administration of Medici, Brazil adjusted its technological plan to reduce foreign dependency. In 1973, the Medici administration formulated the first Basic Plan of Scientific and Technological Development (PBDCT) 'through concerted efforts to absorb imported technology and to create local know-how' (Perruci, 1995, p. 374).

President Ernesto Geisel rose to assume the presidency in 1974 with a new economic plan and 10 years of accelerated economic growth. He launched a second national plan of development and of scientific and technological development. Priority was given to local production of capital goods and electronics, particularly for launching a computer industry. This last sector was set as a necessity in order to support naval modernisation through acquisition of modern European ships and to attempt a reduction in foreign dependence on data processing (Perruci, 1995, pp. 374–375). More important, Geisel implemented nuclear and rocket programmes, the reasons for the rupture between the USA and Brazil in military cooperation.

The Brazilian nuclear and space projects entrained a decisive status for Brazilian future ascendancy to great power status. Possibly, for the same reasons, they were of serious concern to the USA and the Department of State, with the US Congress ruling out any cooperation with Brazil while recommending sanctions. These were executed until the 1990s. Through presidential decisions, the USA twice tried to bring Brazil back into its sphere of influence. First, in the late 1970s, Washington offered Brazil 42 F-5A and F-5Es in a trade for its signing of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Brazil refused. It managed to import nuclear technology from Germany. Secondly, in 1982, the last straw was when the USA proposed to Brazil a new military agreement. The aim of that proposal was to assess what kind of ally Brazil could be in the event of a 'second' Cold War. In the event, mutual suspicions between the parties turned explicit along with the unviable accommodation of the East–West confrontation intersecting North–South dialogue.

President Reagan visited Brazil in 1982 to negotiate the agreement. Two working groups were established; one would study technological and industrial cooperation in military areas. Two years later, the US Secretary of State, George P. Shultz, visited Brazil to sign the Memorandum of Understanding, which mentioned the transfer of technology,

but very ambiguously. The document precluded an 'alliance clause' that ruined any prospect of cooperation. It expressed US interest in trading technology transfer for Brazilian flexibility on its protectionist policy in informatics, Brazilian review of export subsidies and allowing the USA to monitor the destination of Brazil's arms exports. Finally, in the same year, the USA supported the UK and NATO in the prejudicing of Argentina and the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (TIAR) in the Falkland's War. This finished any prospect of strategic partnership between the two countries until more recently.

Since then, Brazil has augmented its developmental rhetoric to other third world countries. Most of them had suffered badly from the impacts of the oil crisis in the 1970s. They cried out for an economic confrontation launched by the Group of 77 in favour of establishing a New International Economic Order (NIEO). This was given impetus by what was seen as a technological blockade by northern countries, one of the alleged causes for their unsuccessful efforts at development. After the Cold War, US-Brazil military cooperation became unfeasible as the USA gave low priority to Latin America. With Brazil favouring European suppliers, although acquiring second-hand weapon systems from them, its foreign policy shifted dramatically in the early 1990s. The ultimate result was to push Brazil towards giving up any further attempt at rapprochement with the USA.

During the presidential terms of Fernando Collor, Itamar Franco and Fernando Cardoso, Brazil operated in accordance with Lake's (2011) propositions as Brazil accepted the hierarchy, due to its power capabilities but also even the legitimacy of the USA in hemispheric defence (Batista, 1993; Hirst & Pinheiro, 1995). Until 1998, Brazil's political leadership was mesmerised by perceptions of a US unipolar moment. This sustained a foreign policy of 'autonomy by participation'. That meant Brazil's commitment to US-proposed international regimes such as the NPT as a trade-off for foreign direct investments and a more active role in international agenda-setting (Cervo, 2002; Silva, 2008). Yet, Washington began pressuring for a Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) and was fiduciary in the tremendous speculation of the 1998 Brazilian financial crises. Since then, Brazil has reassessed and reformulated Geisel's foreign policy. Particularly, the Inacio Lula da Silva administration reset much of the 1970s' agenda and discourse, changing entirely the perspective of Brazilian foreign and defence policies. Similarly, that administration enjoyed high rates of economic development.

In 2003, during Lula's new elected administration, a roundtable chaired by the Ministry of Defence introduced the need for a 'new' approach in Brazilian strategic thinking that should be articulated along with a limited build-up of Brazilian armed forces, considered as inferior to other Latin American forces. Since that moment, Brazil's armed forces' operational status has been associated with the 'revitalisation' of defence industries. That Brazil actually once had what could be considered a defence industry is of doubtful reality (Dagnino, 2010; Franko Jones, 1986). The 2008 National Security Strategy articulated the Brazilian defence role in national development. Its main proposal was a new defence policy destined to support civilian industry. In fact, the document resumed the aspirations of the Brazilian government, armed forces and executives. In its opening, to the document was attached a letter by Minister Nelson Jobim where he related jet acquisition and new submarines' development programmes as strategic to national development. He also pointed out the general higher expectation of international technology transfer and the spin-off effect overall for Brazilian industrial sectors.

Remarkably, in the same period, Brazil confirmed the first findings of pre-salt deposits beneath its coastal waters, an event that has sustained the re-orientation of its international insertion. The estimates of pre-salt deposits in two coasts of the South Atlantic – and the related technologies and political achievements they shall provide – reinforced Brazil's political leadership's belief in the country's future as a great power base, thus enabling it to protect and develop its Blue (Amazon) Economy.

Ends and means of the Brazilian maritime security perspective

The maritime security perspective forms a fundamental component of a new Brazilian security policy. Motivated by several aspects that gravitate around the new oil and gas deposits found in South Atlantic coasts, Brasília endeavours to apply its diplomatic, economic, technical and military assets as tools to secure the South Atlantic in the near future in accordance with its regional interests. This explains a new emphasis on Brazilian naval fleet composition, the new systems of surveillance and control of the coastline, and re-emphasis on the ZPCSA. The upgrade of Brazilian armed – land, air and maritime – forces fulfils the political objective of fielding better capabilities to protect its Blue Economy. Since 2012, Brazil has deployed ocean patrol vessels of the Amazonas-class. Brazil is also building a new submarine fleet involving four Scorpènes that shall operate until 2020.⁹ With the same deadline is the Army's Astros 2020 project for developing a new system of cruise missiles.¹⁰

Brazil intends to support an emerging South Atlantic system of maritime traffic by expanding its own data platforms (*Sistema de Informações sobre o Tráfego Marítimo* – SISTRAM). These already integrate Uruguay and Argentina by the Regional Centre of Maritime Traffic of South Atlantic Area (*Centro Regional de Tráfego Marítimo da Área Marítima do Atlântico Sul* – CRT-AMAS). An ultimate stage of surveillance and control of Brazil's coasts is the system for managing the Blue Amazon (*Sistema de Gerenciamento da Amazônia Azul* – SISGAZ). This involves a more comprehensive multi-platform surveillance system (vessels, radars, satellites and drones) and an integrated data processing and communication capability.

Equally if not more important than acquiring these capabilities are structural reforms underway within the Ministry of Defense. This involved creating a Joint Chief of Armed Forces in 2010 along with a new system for national strategic planning and implementation since 2013. A first strategic assessment for the twenty-first century presents South America as the priority area for consolidating the country's regional interest. Of watershed importance is identifying the South Atlantic as the next priority area wherein Brazil envisions it free of great power influence over a security domain embracing the Caribbean Sea and coastal West Africa. Brazil also considers adopting a vigilant posture in regard to Northwest Africa as well as the Indian Ocean from where foreign great powers shall emanate.¹¹

Accordingly, Brasília has adopted several regional undertakings, including the 2013 Montevideo Declaration which re-launched the ZPCSA as the main Brazilian diplomatic initiative for the South Atlantic.¹² Since 2012, Brazil has reinforced its position as a provider of naval consultancy, training and exercises to West African countries. This is an additional task involving the Amazon-class ocean patrol vessels. Brazil strains itself to be an active player in the Gulf of Guinea. It took part at the Yaoundé AU summit on maritime safety

and security in the Gulf of Guinea of 24–25 June 2013. This resulted in Brazil taking on observer status in evolving an important role in the designing and planning of the executive component of the centre for inter-regional operations. Additionally, Brazil presents itself as a provider of naval expertise. On the one hand, Brasilia intends expanding joint training and exercises in engagement and anti-piracy operations, as well as on criminal and penal maritime issues. On another hand, the joint exercise operations, such as ATLASUR (among Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay with South Africa), IBSMAR (involving Brazil, South Africa and India) and Atlantic Tides (with the USA), have been important in updating Brazilian naval operational standards.

Nonetheless, Brazil's maritime approach suffers serious problems. In terms of ends and means, there are conceptual problems as maritime means are still very handicapped and not well-articulated. The Brazilian maritime diplomatic project has ZPCSA internal and external challenges to address as well. With regard to an institutionalised maritime policy, Brazil has a long way to go. This explains the relevance of the above-mentioned emerging maritime architectures. The National Strategy of Defence (NSD) of 2008 resets the Brazilian defence framework, but just partially. In its recent democratic history, the National Defence Policy Document of 1996, the National Defence Policy of 2005 and the Military Doctrine of Defence of 2007 were unable to produce focused guidelines for the armed forces and to raise a public debate on improving national defence. Conversely, the NSD provides international and regional situational assessments, minimum orientations of security goals and force capabilities, and an agenda for achieving them. However, due to structural deficits in Brazilian defence policy-making, there are plenty of inconsistencies in the NSD. This is because it aims to attend to the several gaps produced by the Ministry of Defence since its creation in 1998 without necessary tools for correcting them.

Strategic orientations have followed two sections. First, the NSD presents the capabilities required by each Brazilian armed force according to hypotheses of engagement in protecting national air, land and water spaces. Second, the NSD highlights three priorities of defence research and development: space, cybernetic and nuclear (Brasil, 2008, p. 3). The NSD requests the Brazilian Navy to conduct a sea denial strategy. It would be accomplished by satellite surveillance, air patrolling – operating from land and the sole aircraft carrier – and a balanced fleet composed of submarines, ships of line and small patrol vessels (Brasil, 2008, pp. 13–14).

The NSD offers comments neither on cooperation between all of these platforms and the other two armed forces, nor on guided/cruise missiles capabilities (Flores, 2012). Therefore, the contemporary contingency of war at sea for coastal defence and the daunting task in designing and sustaining a navy of full capabilities may offer arguments casting doubt on the utility and feasibility of NSD's propositions in maritime security. As noticed before, the Army, not the Navy, heads the Brazilian cruise missile project.

Indeed, it is necessary to realise the fact that Brazilian navy has a tiny anti-ship missile capability. It has only three frigates with missile capabilities and no submarine or small vessel platforms. The on-going submarine project *Programa de Desenvolvimento de Submarinos* (PROSUB) aims for the existence of four Scorpène-class submarines. These are capable of launching cruise missiles, though there is no official communication on acquisition of any weapon-system or any programme of that kind. Additionally, four submarines – considered in a basic readiness' rule of thumb – would be able to cover only a very

limited area of Brazil's coastline. Another consideration is that new fleet will be operational only in the second half of the next decade, and there is no real fleet expansion programme other than the acquisition of oceanic patrol vessels (IISS, 2010, pp. 57–58, 70), while most of the planned acquisitions would replace out-dated vessels.

Considering the low operational readiness of most of Brazil's ships and air fighters as well as absence of an effective joint operational structure (including expertise and command and control systems), it is not possible to consider Brazil having an effective sea denial posture in the next few years. Therefore, what are and what should be the Brazilian navy's role and structure vis-à-vis other Brazilian power capabilities are dangerously open questions. Brazil's greatest challenge is to be able to develop expertise in defence analysis to forecast strategic scenarios, to estimate defence costs and programmes and to design force structures in order to shape the South Atlantic security environment.

There are also challenges to strategy in the internal and external constraints of the ZPCSA. Internally, Brazil supports Argentina's recurrent bids for the Falklands. This creates embarrassment with ECOWAS counties which retain close relations with the UK. These include Nigeria and South Africa. Argentina aims to use ZPCSA as a platform to make its claim, and Brazil due to regional political considerations cannot leave Argentina to attend to this alone. This odd-relationship was even more pronounced in 2013 – the year of ZPCSA's re-launch – as Argentina held the Latin American Group's seat of the UN Security Council: a convenient partnership to uphold this and other Brazilian interests (Patriota, 2013). Thus, although Brazil sees South Africa as the more sceptical and resistant of ZPCSA's members, it seems unable to realise how sensitive the Falklands' issue sounds to the others in regional chancelleries.

More complicated is that US and other military/maritime powers of the day do not officially recognise and support ZPCSA.¹³ The problem is not simply opposition, but omission and indifference. Further, Brazil does not regard, and possibly does not want, Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) to have a greater role in the South Atlantic. On one hand, it considers that India, China and Russia have deeper concerns in the Indian Ocean. On another hand, the case for their having a greater role in the South Atlantic might be seen as threatening Brazil's maritime agenda. Yet, India and China have a growing presence in Africa alongside Brazilian investments and companies (Visentini, 2013). China, especially, has concluded a contract with the Nigerian navy for two offshore patrol vessels and donated a third. It shall also finish construction of a terminal port in Namibia in 2017.¹⁴

Conclusion

Considering the potential of Brazilian reforms and the potential of the new emerging South Atlantic emphasis, there are a few recommendations that can be offered in order to deal with specific and on-going challenges. First, one main issue has to do with Brazil and South Africa as main ZPCSA members, setting a common agenda to develop this important forum. From an outsider perspective, both of them are moving on several initiatives but neither has clearly signalled what they want or can expect from each other in the South Atlantic and/or ZPCSA. For example, Brazilian diplomatic officials see South Africa as a resistant but distant partner of this fledgling architecture. An important consideration here would be to have South Africa as an observer of Yaoundé's centre for

inter-regional operations in order to share the expertise and know-how for development purposes. Brazil and South Africa share a common interest in replicating that acquired expertise in the rest of the South Atlantic.

Second, as the main naval power of today and for the near future, it is important to have, at least, Washington's acknowledgement of ZPCSA and its overall aims in order to consider specific points of mutual interest and avoid mutual instances of misperception. Brazil cannot ignore the relevance of the USA in the South Atlantic, especially since the USA could support ZPCSA for two reasons. First, the USA wants Brazil as a partner as it sees Brazil as a potential stabiliser in South America and West Africa. Second, ZPCSA promises to improve regional security cooperation and capacity-building for operations against common problems and threats: illegal fishing, piracy, search and rescue, smuggling and destruction of natural resources.

Third, a big fault in Brazil's security reforms is a dearth of defence analysts, especially on maritime issues. One can recognise that it may also be a significant fault for most countries of the region in terms of emerging maritime architectures. Therefore, one would suggest the relevance of international cooperation in the qualification of this kind of staff as a feasible initiative by India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA)'s working group on defence policy. To improve decision-making in maritime affairs is a relevant public policy endeavour. It goes far beyond defence and has immediate social and economic impacts. The three countries have strong and weak spots where they might complement each other in common development. In that sense, IBSA might potentially become more instrumental to each country's regional initiatives regarding the Blue Economy.

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Notes

1. Complementary results of my research on the subject is Duarte (2015), which focus on ongoing changes in Brazilian Navy and the challenges it faces and poses to the overall Brazilian maritime approach to the South Atlantic.
2. However, this is not a consolidated condition. Due to fluctuations of Brazilian domestic consumption and production, it shall depend on importing oil derivatives until 2020 (Agencia Brasil, 2014).
3. For a discussion of those results, see Ceratti, de Moraes, and Filho (2015).

4. This section of the paper evolves from previous studies along with Professor Domício Proença Júnior. In 2004, I assisted him in the project Door into Summer: Brazil and the Nuclear Power. Recently, we reassessed this analysis and presented it at Latin American Studies Association's International Conference on Toronto, October 2010, see Proença Júnior and Duarte (2010).
5. This paper adheres to the perspective of Mearsheimer's offensive realism, a version of structural realism as proposed by Waltz (1979), and answering Wendt (1995) 's constructivism challenge. We adhere to offensive realism because it offers a material definition of power and objective analytical tools to assess it. Mearsheimer proposes a theory of international politics grounded on the distribution of material capabilities, and the intrinsic logic of the means of use of power. For a comprehensive review on the entire debate on offensive realism, unipolarity vs. hegemony and the balance of its results in terms of qualifiers and criticism of Mearsheimer's conclusions, see Diniz (2006), esp pp. 2–17. For a more complete presentation of the consequences for the international system and the consideration of the state of the system, see Diniz (2005).
6. A proper assessment between Mearsheimer's offensive realism and Clausewitz's theory of war still waits scholarship work, though there are several points of convergence and possible conceptual progress from this endeavour. A preliminar essay on this perspective is Duarte's 'A Condição Estratégica na América do Sul de Guerras Limitadas e suas Implicações para o Brasil', see: Duarte (2010).
7. Nevertheless, it should not be taken for granted; Brazilian nominal defence budget is the 11th largest one. See latest Stockholm International Peace research Institute (SIPRI) Trends in World Military Expenditure: http://www.sipri.org/googlemaps/milex_top_15_2014_exp_map.html.
8. For a narrative of this acquisition program, see Peron (2011), for a comparative analysis with the Indian case, see Vucetic and Duarte (2015).
9. Check Brazilian Navy updates on the programme at: <https://www.marinha.mil.br/prosub>
10. See: <http://www.epex.eb.mil.br/index.php/projetos/astros-2020.html>.
11. Presentation by Division General Decio Schons, Deputy of International Affairs Office, Brazilian Ministry of Defense.
12. Interview with an official of the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 10 February 2014.
13. In an interview with a senior political analyst of the US Embassy in Brazil, the acronym was not recognised and stated that the USA has no position in relation to it, though the general concept of the enterprise is convergent to the US perspective to the region.
14. See: <http://www.janes.com/article/49162/nigerian-navy-commissions-four-vessels>; and <http://www.wantchinatimes.com/news-subclass-cnt.aspx?id=20150514000133&cid=1102>.

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