Defense and Security policies for the South Atlantic region in the 21st Century

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1 WAR AND THE DOMINANT IMPERIAL POWER

In this reflection on Defense policies for the South Atlantic I will go against the grain: I will consider the war the central datum in the world we live in and will consider strange the international political studies that disregard its bases, warriors, armament producers and the ideologies that they disseminate.

War and preparation for war guide life in the present and the future of States and societies. This assertion would not be necessary: nobody in their right mind and having subject knowledge would believe the opposite. However, the dominant way of thinking that appears in the analyses about international relations, enhancing the value of "stability" and "order" as major assets and as the highest aims of individuals, society and States, captiously belies this elementary attitude and disseminates unsubstantiated premises.

"Stability" and "order" represent the overcoming or the absence of war; they are ideas upheld by the perspective of sustainable peace, that is, at the end of history in the way we know it or in the change of conditions for mankind. Stability would represent the extinction of continuous preparation for war, something men have known since the first records of human existence.

My analysis of international politics is based on the principle according to which bloody confrontation and its preparation are normal, not exceptional, in the relations among societies and States. I consider that war and preparation for war do not take place because of circumstances that are special, extraordinary,

resulting from "failures", "errors", "inadequate handling of poli-cies", "misconceptions", "deviations", or "abilities". This kind of explanation denies the fact that national autonomies may come true without confrontation and that carnage is part of the human experience.

I believe that bloodshed as well as its preparation are part of the ADN of the relations between societies and States. Indeed, I take care when using the words "bellicosity" and "pacifism": none of them expresses, in itself, anything positive or negative. "Peace" results from imposing the will of the strongest; the bellicose atti-tude results from insubordination of the one who is dominated and of the necessity of the ruler. The intrinsic value of each one of these terms is limited by the political purposes established in well-defined historical circumstances. Only the circumstances and the perspectives of the actors-observers will permit to credit clear value to these words.

In every "theoretical matrix" of the studies classified as "International Relations" the Kantian utopia is present, serving the purposes of the dominant position. Those who accept domination absorb the notions of "stability" and "order" as just and true. On the other hand, the ones who actually repel domination, certainly cannot accept them as something unquestionably desirable.

Whoever dominates knows the need for increasingly advanced technology and knows that the most important item in the latest developments on the market is the warlike artifact produced by an industrial complex formed by multiple and intricate interests. In the past this complex was called "war industry", later on "military-industrial". Now, the expression "Defense industry"prevails.

Economic competition and the insertion of a State in the global scene are directly related to the results of efforts of innovation in science and technology and the industrial absorption of new features. This absorption makes Defense-oriented investments in research and innovation profitable. In turn, capital invested for rentable purposes is present in the entire chain of relations lead-ing a State to a condition of command or subservience.

We are here facing an apparently contradictory structure: if the owner of the assets needs war, in order to drive the market, on the other hand there is a demand for a stable legal basis, without which business would not be implemented. What happens is that the capitalist race leads to conflicts that deny laws and agreements and continuously engender new institutional arrangements.

Ever since jusnaturalism we know that without a "contract" there is no commerce. A certain comprehensive legal-institutional framework is required to achieve capital gain. Respect of international agreements and legislation are assumptions for international business, but disrespect towards what is legislated or agreed upon is also a necessary and recurrent practice whether on the part of the powers that monopolize armament production or on the part of those who are driven by libertarian and autonomist aspirations.

Another aspect I would like to draw attention to is that the debate on the Defense of the South Atlantic requires taking into account the terms "imperialism" and "colonialism". On both sides of the ocean we will be dealing with ex-colonies that did not achieve a reasonable autonomy. South America, more "westernized", is far from matching the powers of the "North" in economic and military terms; Africa did not even heal the sequels of the wars of liberation and lives in permanent turmoil; its internal conflicts are fueled by the clashes of hegemonic countries.

I call "imperialism" the movements projecting the strenght of the dominant power or power in search of domination beyond its borders. Some will certainly consider such an attitude as ideological, radical, limited, simplistic and so on. It may be challenged that domination does not only occur through physical violence and that the defense of the State borders depends on the care with what is called "strategic environment".

Obviously, the use of force on States and societies happens in conjunction with varied resources and pleas, notably through economic deals. However, the subaltern condition is expressed through military inferiority and lack of ability to establish alliances that are capable of imposing resistance to the stronger part.

Actually, the objections to the use of the concept "imperialism" are almost always related to semantics and aimed at concealing the principle according to which the ruler imposes his determination by force.

An aspect usually concealed by imperialistic politics (concealed including by those who are ruled!) is the fact that domination reinforces the tendency of the ruler to accumulate advantages in international competition due to indirect financing of their military capacity. War nourishes the capitalist development by fostering new products in the scientific, technological, industrial, political, and societal fields.

As regards the "strategic environment", it is about a security strip that may be the size of the world, depending on the will and the military capacity of a major power. This occurred with the British Empire and after World War II with the hegemonic power, the United States. France, that has never renounced imperialistic whims, has defined an environment that comprises various continents.

Throughout the twentieth century, powers of different economic capacities maintained prolonged wars in order to retain their domination over distant areas, whether in the form of "colonies", "protectorates", "areas of influence" or "overseas territories.

In the terms of the competitive world we know, there are no signs of quenching the imperialistic eagerness. Imperialism is fueled by the need to guarantee consumers of goods and services as well as regular and reliable sources of raw materials at a low price; by the need to dispose of loan contractors and buyers of technology.

The old colonial systems crumbled over the past century, but the disappearance of an institutional configuration does not nullify the practice of domination exerted to the detriment of the sovereignty of more feeble States. Various procedures were created to maintain dependency of most of the countries in favor of a few States with higher economic and military capacity.

As "colonized", I indicate someone who is dominated and does not strive nor engages himself firmly in order to break the diverse bonds of subordination. I do not place Franz Fanon in disuse:

whoever is colonized is afraid and gives up the possibility of thinking his own way; he adopts, consciously or not, the foundations of the ruler's way of thinking.

It is worth considering if, in the list of those colonized, we may include the majority of the teachers of Political Science and International Relations, diplomats, military staff, journalists, Brazilian politicians and judges, regardless of whether they embrace social reforms or believe to be homeland defenders. For this purpose, a good test would be to measure their appreciation in relation to the concepts of "order" and "stability" in their considerations about the relationships among States.

In recent years, the rapid expansion of International Relations studies in Brazil reflected a lot more than the international presence acquired by the country through initiatives guided by the desire of autonomy: it reflected the conservative wave that over the last decades contaminated the academic intelligentsia, increasingly oriented by the way of thinking of the universities of the dominant countries. It is curious to observe that there is no study nor discipline in International Relations to be granted academic certification if it is not strictly backed by Anglo-Saxon ideologists.

Most of the Brazilian literary output in this new area of knowledge is based on theories and proceedings recognized by the imperialistic desideratum and nourishes, consequently, the justifying discourse practiced by the world hegemony. Uncritical adoption of theories in the area of Political Sciences, from which International Relations derive, generates consequences about the insertion of the State and society in the world scene inasmuch as it contributes to seal the condition of exiled in their own land.

Regarding the Brazilian army, some theses, including the ones that sound patriotic, supported at the most important schools of the Army, the Navy and the Air Force seem to be texts ordered by the Pentagon. The ideas embedded in the documents that guide the National Defense do not hide old and meaningless practices in the search of technological partnerships with the holders of cutting-edge technology; they deny what the military themselves usually claim: holders of sensitive technology do not give it to others so they do not have to share power.

It is another story between diplomats and parlamentarians, their positions are not that monolithic. Ideologically, the diplomatic corporation is less selective than the military one; it does not require the same "unity of doctrine". In turn, the structure of parliaments inevitably gives occasion to differentiated points of view. However, parliaments scarcely interfere in Defense strategic definitions. As for the judges, their unpreparedness for Defense business is demonstrated by the need of corporate courts. Military courts exempt the ordinary judge of dealing with realities that are utterly strange to his professional qualification. And the editorialists of the major newspapers, that express the tendencies of politically hegemonic sectors, seem to live in constant ventriloquistic competition: they assume the role of heralds of the ideas of the hegemonic centers. There are no substantial differences in the way of thinking of the leading press.

2 MASKING WARLIKE ACTIVITIES

We must verify the motivations of the scant attention given by the experts in International Relations regarding the war and the warriors.

It is known that nobody has yet explained, in a definite manner, the origin of the State. But any attempt of reasonable explanation will mention the war as one of the motivations for its emergence and consolidation. The ideas of cooperation and harmony among societies arise from the inevitability and the harshness of bloody clashes. Men worship and hate war. I wrote about it in my essay "O Militar e a Civilização" (DOMINGOS NETO, 2005).

Since Machiavel, modern thinking has consecrated the idea that the State is the exercise of dominion over society. Only the State can have the monopoly of violence. The consolidation of the State, as well as its permanence, requires the use of force. It is the State that has to be prepared for war. When this does not occur, whatever the reasons for it, its existence starts to depend on a foreign power. Obviously, in the condition of a protectorate it has short autonomy.

In this reflection, we take into account the State that claims its sovereignty, that is, the one that gets prepared for war.

As the war is always decided by whoever exerts or wants to exert power (indeed, the war is the clearest example of exercizing power: the result of the war defines who is powerful) masking its effective reasons is part of the warlike strategy, otherwise it would demobilize men and women out of killing and dying. Repeating a truism: in war, truth is always the first one to be sacrificed for all it involves of sacred in itself and the demonization of others. Who would succeed in involving collective groups in bloodshed without giving sacred reasons for it? But this entails criminalizing the enemy.

Masking the warlike reason will always be a far-fetched, refined process. It is possible to see common sense engulfed by political wiles and ingenious speeches; what is difficult to accept is its bland support by the academic thought.

Nowadays, the State discourse has as its issue at hand the "defense of democracy", of "human rights", and of the "environment". Those who have the slightest notion about the war know that it is a phenomenon that radically denies all of this. In war there is no democracy, rights or environmental concerns; the war interrupts any whims of respect to principles and regulations that interfere with the desire of subduing others. When the rifle does the talking, all the rest is silent.

The persistent attempt of masking the warlike reason has its civilizing aspect: it reveals the shame of the conscious and programmed elimination of other fellow men. Benedict Anderson (2011) pinpoints that the former ministries of War started to be called ministries of Defense after the Second World War without having their institutional nature altered. Following Anderson, the malaise was explained by denial.

Who would deny that the international system built in the last centuries had as its support competition and not cooperation? The "time of peace", usual expression in the thought of strategists, indicates the systematic, persistent, and increasingly complex preparation of new carnage. Indeed, the use of the concept "stability" as an unquestionable universal value, in the sense of what happens

among those who study International Relations, is nothing more than an artifice used to deny the undignified nature of the "international orders" established up to now.

Capitalistic competition has bloodshed as necessity and horizon, not pacific coexistence among actors who mutually respect each other. Without periodic crises, violent disputes for markets, imposition of rules to the peoples of the world; without "international order", capitalistic development would not exist.

When masking the warlike reason as a key element in international relations, theoreticians of imperialism and their ill-disguised followers intend to deny the desire of domination of the strongest and the right of the minor to defy the major. International Relations theories wish to ignore that the "order" is strictly a system to please whoever holds the force. The fallacious expression "international community", brazenly applied, without quotation marks, express the imposition of the combined desire of the major powers over the minor ones.

The idea that war is at the core of the human experience and that it shows itself vigorous in modern times contradicts the notions assimilated by those who deal with international business. Normally, everyone functions with the possibility of "harmony", "respect", "goodwill", in short, "peace" among States and societies. These concepts are present in studies and practices of international policies; intermingled, they provide acceptable accounts among the actors of the global scene, masking the warlike reason that governs the guidelines of the powerful.

I have been using the terms "warlike reason" for the principles that feed what the military language calls "force projection", that is, the capacity of imposing their will, whether by means of dissuasion or by the use of violence.

It is commonplace to say that the limited circle of the giants of the financial world, of the industry, and of the services guide public policies, notably foreign policies. But this needs to be made relative: military apparatus have been deciding with increasing agility. They do not decide ultimately, but they are always taken into consideration. Among the powers that dictate the "world order", the decision to make war is hardly monocratic.

In war and in its preparation the military corporation reaches a level of expertise and autonomy that allows it under certain circumstances to decide in absentia of society and political power. The industrial and the financial world know it, starting to function tuned to the military stratum. We live at a time in which scandals of indistinct order between the public interest and the private interest suddenly appear. They are shows of false morality. One who studies and is minimally informed knows about the promiscuity between arms producers and State agents, despite the fact that these relationships are protected as State secret.

Talking about fear, Eduardo Galeano (2001) said that the soldier fears the lack of weapons and weapons factories fear the lack of wars. The powerful ally of the military corporation is the industrial system focused on the productin of war material, that is, of the Defense industry. This system also functions in the production of wars.

What is effectively masked is the domination of the weakest by the strongest. There are no inequalities, exploration, peoples' submission, in short, situations inherent to capitalistic development, without brutalities. This is what one intends to mask.

Due to all that has been said, I consider, that in order to analyze international relations appropriately, analyzing the geopolitical chess and the Defense and Security policies, it is fundamental to know about war, military corporations and their members. It is also worth remembering industrialists and service providers related to war activities. This is evidently a major challenge. We are talking about institutions of high complexity, hermetical, under legal protection, and that tend to be increasingly autonomous within the State apparatus.

Notwithstanding the relevance of knowledge about the Armed Forces in order to understand the sociopolitical processes it is intriguing to see the effort undertaken to avoid their permanence as large black boxes.

In the context of the Alvaro Alberto Program (Programa Álvaro Alberto), the project developed by the Nationalities Watch (Observatório das Nacionalidades) faces the challenge of shedding some light on the defense systems of the South Atlantic in

the context of the Brazil-Africa relations. We shall add something quite significant in this regard if we disobey the canons and the practices of the so-called International Relations.

3 ABOUT THE SOUTH ATLANTIC AND AFRICA

Those who seriously focus on the areas called "South Atlantic" and "Africa" initially come across the difficulties of their physical boundaries. Where do these areas begin and where do they end? Next come the questions: what does Africa have to offer to the market and in what conditions will the disputes over its wealth be resolved?

The African continent is perhaps the most closed area of the Planet to foreign observation. Africa fascinates the "western" look by the mysteries involving it.

From a geographic viewpoint, the largest part of the Continent lies in the northern hemisphere, but it is common to include it in the "South", a vague term, loaded with stigma, used to characterize what conforms in a subordinate way to the industrialized world. As for the "South Atlantic", it is an area that is confused not only with the North, but with other oceans as well, particularly the Pacific and the Indian Ocean. Ever since its beginning, the North Atlantic Treaty, even though targeting communism, considered action in the South. After the Second World War, African riots against colonial rule were an important chapter in the East-West confrontation.

The African continent was always important for mankind, even considering the geopolitical aspect. Interest in dominating it was not restricted to the exploitation of human muscles, raw materials, and the conquest of consumer markets. Various African geographical points are decisive for world deals. Presently, military blockade of such points would stop large part of the international trade and would cause unmanageability to the distribution of the fundamental commodity in geopolitical articulations: energy sources. The African Northeast has borders with the most conflicted area since the discovery of its oil deposits: the Middle East. European merchants traveling East will have their route shortened if they go around Africa.

This continent is not a unity, it is a multifaceted mosaic of cultures, ethnic groups and physical environments. Even though they know it, the "westerners" insist in homogenizing the vast African space. The tendency of capitalism is the diffusion of world-wide standardized institutions in order to favor business. The most influential international organizations, like the World Bank and the IMF, act in the dissemination of these standards.

The "West" has been present in Africa for a long time, always in an aggressive and manifestly deleterious way. There is a vast literature reporting on such presence. The "West" expresses itself nowadays, in a decisive manner, through the intellectualized national African elites. I refer to the ones who led the anti-colonial struggle and now carry out the construction of national States. This kind of State is celebrated as the result of a civilizing process, but its construction in Africa fully reveals its somber, bloody, ruth-lessly destructive contents.

Africa's "westernization" is increasing and, in the sense of the capitalistic expansion, inevitable. The struggle to build nationali-ties to legitimate States implies the destruction of ancestral beliefs, values, and practices; it requires the construction of collective memories far from lively and vibrant traditions, as revealed by exuberant African fictionists who write in European languages.

From a political point of view, principles and values inherent to industrialized States, with an emphasis on "democracy", "human rights", and "respect for the individual", are strictly incompat-ible with the preservation of unique cultural traits of the African peoples.

Another incompatible aspect is the establishment of land borders. A lot has been written about the traumatic effects of the geopolitical division of Africa starting with the agreements set by the colonial powers since the end of the nineteenth century. The continent's political division is not reasonable and this foments permanent internal tensions.

Less well known is the ancestral interaction of Africans with their environment. In this field of action, the westernization of Africa, besides causing irreversible changes in the environment, will destroy precious knowledge.

Literature often refers to the colonized world as a large unit, including the Americas, Africa, and parts of the Asian continent. But the African colonization process cannot be easily compared to any other. No other process saw the aggression suffered by this continent with the forced transfer of its population over the centuries. The so-called African diaspora embraces Europe and the whole American continent. Africans were spread throughout the world and they have nourished an endless wave of ethnic and social conflicts.

Another difficulty when comparing experiences of colonization is the fact that Africans successfully resisted the European invasion. Africa lived through the colonial rule, but actually it was never colonized through occupations, as it happened in America. For centuries, foreigners were only in the outskirts. The entrance of colonial forces was only made possible with the technical means available during the Second World War.

Western capitalism has permanently drained African wealth. Currently, Africa is plundered in many billions of dollars of payment to the "debt service", in profits of all sorts of investments and in the exploitation of its natural riches. Africa finances the western dominant classes through the low price of its raw materials, of the low salaries paid to the Africans and the devastation of its environment.

This continent was and will remain an object of bloody dispute because it has what the development of capitalism requires: energy, minerals, land to produce food, biodiversity, creativity, and a consumer market in rapid expansion.

For these reasons, any study about the defense of the South Atlantic in the context of the Brazil-Africa Cooperation should start with an analysis of the imperialistic tendencies of industrialized countries and their large military apparatus. Special attention ought to be given to the guidelines of the United States. Africa was always the object of European intervention, but American prominence in the continent is clearer every day, even corresponding to the overwhelming presence of China.

With the ongoing geopolitical reordering, the rise of the Asian power, the reintroduction of Russia as a global leading player,

and the beginning of the Brazilian presence in the Continent, the American initiatives are extensive, sprawling throughout the African continent on small military bases designed for rapid expansion. From the point of view of the defense of the South Atlantic, the main information to be retained by the Brazilian country is the growth of the dispute between China and the United States in Africa.

Due to the frailties and uncertainties inherent to the process of forming the African national States, we cannot exclude the possibility of seeing, after some time, the emergence of Philo-American dictatorships, replicating the experience lived in Latin America throughout the twentieth century.

4 CHALLENGES FOR THE BRAZILIAN STATE

Brazilian policies for the South Atlantic need to be multifaceted and implemented by different instruments of the State. Despite being one of the major economies in the world, Brazil will not compete advantageously in Africa with the same values and proceedings of powers that are more capable from a technological and industrial poimt of view.

The search for a favorable position among African countries is an unquestionable necessity. But before dealing with the Brazilian presence in Africa, it would be worth observing the domestic conditions for the strategic planning of the defense of the South Atlantic.

In this case, the greatest challenge for Brazil is to overcome the colonial mentality that is characteristic of its political, economic, intellectual, and military elites. The establishment of defense initiatives aiming at the search for effective autonomy does not occur to the colonized individual.

These elites resist the reduction of the deep internal inequalities inherited from an enslaving past; they continue to look to the European metropolises and to the United States; they reject proposals to get close to their South American neighbors and they see Africa as a distant world, without promising prospects. The way of thinking of this elite is daily revealed by their criticism towards the

efforts to reduce internal inequalities and to the guidelines of the foreign policies adopted in the last decade. If the colonial mentality of the civil elites is overtly demonstrated, the perception of the military culture requires a closer look. Apparently, the Armed Forces nowadays are more open to an approximation with Africa. Brazilian military schools started to receive a growing number of African students.

However, all we have to do is to pay attention to the self-image of the corporations: in the Navy and in the Army they insist on cultivating their colonial origins. Fear of social reforms and attachment to the model of society of developed countries is made explicit through rigid anti-communism. The South American movements that defend social reforms and new international alignments are not well seen in the barracks. With this kind of mentality, it is difficult for the Brazilian soldier to take initiatives according to the importance and the nature of their role on the other side of the Atlantic.

Besides, admiration for the ones who have and keep force is part of a soldier's nature. The Brazilian military corporations continue to be excessively dependent on products of industrialized countries. During the military dictatorship, the officers deliberately designed a Defense industry forgetting that its viability would depend on permanent investments and, above all, on the existence of external consumers that are conquered by bonds of complicity gradually contrived. Brazilian presence in Africa and approximation with South American neighbors would have helped to maintain the capacity of the Brazilian Defense industry.

In order to play as a sovereign actor in the international scene the Brazilian State needs to reform its military establishment in depth so that it portrays the objectives of the Brazilian society overcoming its conservative ways and the traits of a colonial-enslaving culture. How is it possible to accept a compulsory military service that persists leading the poor to the barracks and sparing the well-to-do?

Regarding the technological development, the search for autonomy is a lot more directed to agreements with industrial powers than partnerships with national institutions capable of developing

the country's own knowledge. This is a much longer and more difficult way. However, it is undoubtedly the soundest and the most promising one.

Brazil has an academic system of a certain importance, particularly due to the investments made during the last decade. Nonetheless, the partnerships held with the Armed Forces are limited and occasional. The Brazilian academic world will certainly respond vigorously to the demands dealing with research and experimentation. The country lacks a development agency specialized in the research of Defense materials. Projects that the Brazilian Armed Forces are interested in could be developed in partnership with African countries. If the defense of the South Atlantic depends directly on cooperation with Africa, it is better for the country to foster the development of the technical and scientific capacity of Africans.

The participation of Brazilian military personnel in peace missions in Africa represents an excellent opportunity to accumulate knowledge about the continent, besides encouraging good relations and creating a positive image of Brazil. The process of learning in these missions lacks systematization and widespread dissemination in Brazilian society.

Finally, the defense of the South Atlantic depends on the inclusion of the Armed Forces in multiple activities directed to the strengthening of Brazilian relations with African countries.

Brazilian performance can contribute to undo the ties that set aside the huge African space to imperialistic purposes. In this regard, the strengthening of political relations with African States may not be delayed. However, in order to succeed, the first and most decisive step is overcoming the colonial mentality of the Brazilian elites.