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Grand Strategy and Peace Operations: the Brazilian Case

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Abstract

This article aims to contribute to the analysis of Brazilian grand strategy and the place of UN peace operations (POs) in the context of this strategy. It deals with the political economy of POs and grapples with the trends of POs in the recent past, especially the increasingly robust mandates of peace operations and their implications. Brazilian participation in peace operations is discussed, focusing on its main characteristics and the consequences of an absence of consensus on the role of POs for the country's grand strategy. Finally, suggestions are proposed that might create synergies between participation in POs and Brazil's grand strategy.

Keywords: Brazilian foreign policy, brazilian defense policy, grand strategy, peace operations.

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Introduction

The Grand Strategy of a nation is the ultimate proof of its capacity to articulate a plethora of statecraft tools. As such, a more fine-grained look at the grand strategy of an aspirational power like Brazil could contribute to the literature on the conditions underlying a country's transition (or failure thereof) from middle to great power status (Mares and Trinkunas 2016). In the same vein, it could be useful to studies focusing on a deeper understanding of civil-military relations in newer democracies by means of the incorporation of three essential dimensions: civilian control of the military, effectiveness, and efficiency (Bruneau and Matei 2008). Hence, it may also favor a deeper insight into the comparative development of security institutions (Croissant and Kuehn 2015).

In this context, the author intends to address the following question: how does the participation in UN peace operations (POs) is inserted in Brazil's grand strategy? As a policy-oriented study with theoretical awareness, the article will propose an operational

concept of grand strategy and suggest a general measure to gauge its successful implementation. Grand strategy relates to the use of economic, political, and military means to achieve material and symbolic goals considered essential for a specific political community (Murray and Grimsley 1996; Rosecrance and Stein 1993; Trubowitz 2011). It involves the articulation of a vast array of public policies with a view to attaining those goals in the face of international constraints and opportunities.

As a broad concept fraught with the difficulties arising from the vagaries of domestic and international politics, grand strategy should be understood more as a necessary desideratum than as a precise yardstick. As such, the success (or coherence) of a grand strategy should be measured in relation to the foreign policy objectives of a specific country during the time span in which the latter were considered valid by decision makers. Although virtually all aspects of a country's internal and external policies could be included in an encompassing evaluation of grand strategy, pride of place goes to foreign and defense policies – the ones more closely related to the concept of strategy *per se*.

In the case of Brazil, there seems to be conspicuous absence of a coherent grand strategy, given the inherent contradictions of the state apparatus (Alsina Jr. 2009; 2015; Brands 2010). Under these conditions, the implementation of a less problematic grand strategy is *a fortiori* crucial. For its restricted scope, an issue such as participation in POs cannot occupy a central place in the grand strategy of Brazil. This, however, does not mean that its importance should be considered negligible. POs may be useful as conduits for raising the nation's international profile. Realistically, engaging in POs will not result in the inclusion of Brazil as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) – a goal pursued by Itamaraty since the 1990s.¹ Nor will it serve to ensure the comprehensive modernization of the armed forces or significantly increase the professionalism of officers and soldiers.² Still, it is possible to imagine a scenario where the POs could contribute to the efforts aimed at raising the country's strategic profile; modernizing the Navy, Army and Air Force; and increasing the professionalism of the military – all grand strategic objectives laid out in 2012's White Paper (Brazil, 2012).

Some words on UN Peace Operations

UN peace operations have been the object of increasing attention by Brazilian academics. Nevertheless, studies on the subject tend to suffer from two fundamental flaws: “officialism”³, on the one hand, and lack of comprehensive knowledge about the political economy of UN POs and its significance for the national grand strategy, on the other. On this last point, it is noteworthy that POs are not considered priority tasks of the armed forces of major military powers. I would

1 Itamaraty, Brazil's Ministry of External Relations, has been pursuing this goal since the beginning of the 1990s.

2 An officialist view that erroneously states without qualifications the alleged increase in the professionalism of the troops involved in POs can be found in Lannes 1998, 15.

3 Officialism is a generic term that refers to a set of ideas used to justify an official discourse on certain topics. Often, this set of ideas lacks foundations in reality, being a politically expedient narrative functional for the short term interests of governmental authorities.

hypothesize, the lower the weight of a state in the international system, the greater will be the relevance of peace operations for its grand strategy.

Although they may merit considerable space on the declaratory level of great powers foreign policy, none of the five permanent members of the UNSC, P-5, devotes significant portions of their defense budgets for this type of activity.⁴ This fact is explained by an obvious reason: POs represent one of the most conspicuous expressions of the stratification of world power. Contemporarily, P-5 countries determine where, when, and how the UN should deploy peacekeepers and outsource the implementation of tasks to the armies of developing countries.⁵ This fundamental fact, often overlooked by the prevalent humanitarian rhetoric that substantiates the public justification of POs, is the axis on which is based the political economy of such operations.

Political and military implications of 21st century POs

In yet another of the periodic review exercises undertaken by the UN in the field of peace operations, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon established in 2014 a panel of experts led by the former President of East Timor, José Ramos-Horta. The Panel was created to review the role of these operations, bearing in mind that: “(...) we must acknowledge that peace operations today are increasingly called on to confront politically complex and challenging conflicts, often in volatile security environments where operations are directly targeted”⁶.

To countries in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the initiative of the UNSG caused suspicion, since it was feared that the Ramos-Horta Panel could endorse what many countries perceived to be a disturbing increase in the use of force by POs - embodied in the frequent adoption of robust mandates under the auspices of chapter VII of the UN Charter (Hunt 2013, 1-2). The precedent of the creation of MONUSCO's Force Intervention Brigade (FIB), authorized by resolution 2098 (2013) of the Security Council, justified the fears of troop and police contributing countries (TPCCs). Moreover, there were serious doubts about the effectiveness of the use of an offensive force in the protection of civilians and the legal implications of actions taken by the FIB in the Democratic Republic of Congo (Whittle 2015, 872-875).

4 To verify this information, one simply needs to compare the value of the contribution of each P-5 to the budget for UN peacekeeping operations, in the fiscal year 2015/2016 (United Nations, 2015a), with the value of the defense budget of each P-5 in 2015 (Military Balance, 2016). In the case of China, for example, the financial contribution to UN's OPs represented 0.37% of the defense budget in 2015 (author's calculations). The fact that P-5 are the ones contributing the most to UN's peacekeeping budget in absolute terms – a reflection of their differentiated status as permanent members of the Security Council – does not change the reality mentioned above. Even the United States, responsible for more than 28% of the peacekeeping budget, spends only a tiny fraction of its defense budget with peacekeeping. All P-5 invest less than 1% of their military budgets in UN's peacekeeping efforts.

5 Episodically, small developed countries participate in UN's POs. In situations where there is direct involvement of troops from the P-5, as in Somalia (USA, 1992-93) and the Central African Republic (France, 2013-), they are not subordinated to UN forces deployed on the ground. In such cases, P-5 troops operate in parallel to the blue helmets - often with a peace enforcement mandate.

6 Speech available at United Nations (2014a).

In fact, rather than annoyance with POs' possible loss of credibility, which could now be seen as parts to the conflicts, TPCCs regarded with concern the increased risk involved in peace operations⁷. A study from SIPRI, however, concludes there is no meaningful relation between more robust mandates and an increase in the number of casualties suffered by blue helmets (Van Der Lijn and Smit 2015). The report in question states that apart from casualties recorded in Mali (MINUSMA), the average number of peacekeepers deaths in POs caused by hostile action in 2014 was lower than in 1990⁸. Additionally, when casualties by accidents and diseases are included, the bulk of the causes of fatalities, also in 2014 the number of deaths was lower than in 1990 (Van Der Lijn and Smit 2015, 3). It should be noted that Brazil, for more than 10 years leading MINUSTAH, has not seen a single death due to combat⁹.

Despite the above data, the dominant narrative within DPKO is that not only the complexity of POs is nowadays greater, but there is growing need to generate forces capable of acting in increasingly dangerous environments - in which asymmetric threats prevail¹⁰. Thus, performance standards and protection of the troops should be raised in order to meet the demands arising from UNSC mandates that establish multidimensional peace operations in places where there is no peace to be kept (Ladsous 2015). Those mandates involve multiple tasks such as: facilitating the political process through the promotion of national reconciliation and dialogue; protection of civilians; assistance to the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants; support for the organization of elections; protection and promotion of human rights; and assistance in restoring the rule of law (United Nations 2008, 7)¹¹.

Troop contributing countries: who contributes and why?

It is essential to reflect on the reasons leading states to contribute forces to UN POs. Newer democracies – which include most small and medium powers – have three basic motivations to participate in POs: external signaling; induction of reforms in the armed forces; and supplementation of defense budgets (Sotomayor 2014, 36-37).

7 A fundamental concern of the main TPCCs is the separation of the tasks of peacekeeping and peace enforcement, so that their troops will not be seen as parties to the conflict (Pakistan Mission to United Nations 2016).

8 The study shows that the average of peacekeepers deaths (soldiers and police) by 1000, in hostile action, decreased from 0.4 in 1990 to about 0.3 in 2014. When MINUSMA (Mali) is excluded, however, this average drops to 0.08 in 2014.

9 During the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, 18 Brazilian soldiers who were serving in MINUSTAH died. There was also the suicide of a General, the natural demise of another, and three other deaths caused by electric shock (one soldier); cerebral aneurysm (one sergeant); and accident with a military vehicle (one sergeant). In all, Brazil recorded 23 fatalities - none in combat (Estado-Maior do Exército. *Fatalidades em Missões de Paz – Militares*, 2016. Mimeo).

10 See Ki-moon, 2015.

11 The document “United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: principles and guidelines” (United Nations 2008), also known as Capstone Doctrine, was the first systematic effort of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) to establish a doctrine of peace operations. Having faced severe resistance from developing countries, both the job title and various concepts (such as peace operations) would be changed in the final version. These changes aimed to reduce the ambition of the report and minimize its political scope, avoiding turning it into an instrument of pressure on TPCCs.

External signaling involves the demonstration of international commitment, the assumption of a new international identity and the dissemination of new “progressive” policies. Induction of domestic reforms includes the transformation of the role and missions of the armed forces, the international socialization of the military (which could theoretically have a positive impact on the domestic level in terms of institutional stability), and the integration of foreign and defense policies. Finally, the supplementation of defense budgets relates to the increment of wages of uniformed personnel, the greater attractiveness of the military career, and the financing of operating expenses and procurement of equipment (Sotomayor 2014, 36).

Note, however, that the above mentioned reasons are rationalizations *ex post facto* and do not necessarily appear fully or coherently in the decision-making process leading to the deployment authorization of national troops under UN auspices. Sotomayor, analyzing the cases of Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay – in particular the role of the three countries in MINUSTAH –, shows that the motivations and effects of the participation of each country in the mission deployed in Haiti were significantly different (Sotomayor 2014). In any event, the study of Sotomayor helps to dispel some myths about the effects of POs on the armed forces of developing countries. The most important of them being the belief that POs would serve to perfect the professional skills of the military and instill “democratic values” in the peacekeepers – including through contact with armed forces of other countries – as some authors claim (Aguilar 2015, 127).

The idea that contact with other armed forces in POs would be beneficial does not stand up to closer scrutiny (Sotomayor 2014, 199-200). Firstly, the character of a peace operation such as MINUSTAH (a mission which concentrates 80% of Brazil’s peacekeepers¹²) is undemanding in terms of the professional training of the military and sophistication of the equipment used by the troops. Secondly, interaction with troops from less developed countries than Brazil brings nothing in terms of professional abilities – since their skills and doctrines tend to be more rudimentary than the Brazilians’¹³. Thirdly, even the possible presence, in the theater of troops, from militarily advanced countries does not necessarily translate into learning, given the potential gap between the *ad hoc* absorption of new doctrinal elements by the national military and the dissemination of this knowledge among other units of the Brazilian Army (EB)¹⁴. Fourthly, the experience of Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay in POs shows that these, in themselves, are not able to significantly strengthen civilian control over the armed forces (Sotomayor 2014, 201-202).

12 Cf. United Nations 2016.. At the moment this article was revised, Brazil still contributed almost 1000 troops to MINUSTAH. However, the UNSG recommend the end of the mission by 15 October 2017 – by which time all the Brazilian troops will have left Haiti.

13 According to data from United Nations (2016), the following countries contributed troops and police officers to MINUSTAH: Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jordan, Mexico, Nepal, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Sri Lanka, United States and Uruguay. Note that the only developed countries in this group are the United States and Canada - which have no troops on the ground, restricting their contribution to staff officers.

14 The mere absorption of foreign doctrines by Brazilian peacekeepers does not mean that these teachings will be disseminated to the rest of the EB, since this diffusion depends not only on the sanction by the Brazilian Army Doctrine Center but as well on the material capacity of the land forces to incorporate these lessons. There is no point in adopting doctrinaire aspects of other armies if these involve the use of equipment inaccessible to the Brazilian military.

In the recent case of Brazil and POs, to this mythology two other fallacies are added. First that the increase in the national participation in peace operations would somehow entitle the country to occupy a permanent seat in the UNSC (Aguilar 2008; Cavalcante 2010; Kenkel 2011). It is worth mentioning in passing that if the magnitude of a country's contribution to UN peacekeeping forces were a meaningful criterion for incorporation to the P-5, Rwanda, Senegal and Burkina Faso should be very strong candidates. After all, these countries allocate, respectively, 18, 27, and 26 percent of their active military contingents for POs – while Brazil commits 0,36% of its active duty personnel for this purpose¹⁵.

The almost unanimous agreement of Brazilian commentators to the fallacy that participation in POs would raise the country's international profile and, consequently, the chances of success of its bid for a permanent seat in the UNSC, seems to be indicative of an attempt to legitimize this kind of engagement before the domestic audience¹⁶. As no troop contributor to POs in the more than 70 years of the UN's existence has been accepted as a permanent member of the Security Council, the burden of proof rests with the thesis' advocates. Further, a quick look at the members of the G-4 (Brazil, India, Germany, and Japan) suffices to lay bare the fact that their variable contributions to peace operations says nothing about the chances of each country in a hypothetical future reform of the UNSC¹⁷.

The second fallacy refers to the argument that the participation of Brazilian troops in POs would help the armed forces in their efforts to “modernize” (Muggah 2015, 14). There is no evidence that the modernization spurt between 2008 and 2010, at which point some relevant projects of arms acquisition were started (e.g. Submarines Program - PROSUB, Guarani armored personnel carrier, KC-390 military transport aircraft, EC-725 tactical transport military helicopter), was related to the increasing Brazilian presence in POs from 2004¹⁸. The period between 2003¹⁹ and 2007 saw a reduction in the military budget as a proportion of national primary expenditure from 9.31% to 8.23% and stagnation as a proportion of GDP from 1.46% to 1.52% (Brustolin 2009, 33-34). While there had been real increase in the Ministry of Defense's (MD) investments during the period (R\$ 1,104 billion to R\$ 3,659 billion), the base of comparison was extremely low (2003 saw a cut of over 50% of the investment in relation to 2002)²⁰. In addition, this episodic investment hike was never publicly justified by the Brazilian Government based on the needs of participation in POs²¹.

15 Data calculated by the author based on: The Military Balance, 2016; United Nations, 2016.

16 Soares de Lima reflects on the urgings of UNSC reform process and the genesis of the Brazilian claim to a permanent seat in the Council (Lima 2009).

17 The G-4 was formed by the four countries in 2004 with the aim of advancing the reform of the UNSC. Germany and Japan are major financial contributors to POs, but small contributors of troops. Japan, in particular, contributes virtually nothing in terms of personnel. India is a major contributor of troops, but a small financial contributor. Brazil is an intermediate contributor of troops and a modest financial contributor.

18 None of this equipment are used in peace operations. Even the Guarani armored personnel carrier, which can be used in POs, never had its construction justified based on the notion that it would be essential for the Brazilian participation in this type of operation. Nor was it used in Haiti.

19 First year of President's Lula term.

20 Cf. Brustolin 2009, 46.

21 They were the result of Nelson Jobim's term as Defense Minister and the reforms implemented by him – in a period in which Brazilian economy was growing significantly.

On the contrary, the almost uninterrupted material penury of Brazil's armed forces, since the return to democracy (1985), represents, in the recent past, a strong incentive for military leaders to engage in POs. This posture is not the result of the latter's meager ability to translate into significant investments in hardware – it should be noted that the type of operation in which Brazil is involved is undemanding in military terms. In reality, it derives from the possibility of receiving additional funding for the training and support of troops engaged in peace operations. In other words, the maintenance of a small portion of the military contingent motivated, trained, and operational (though without challenges that could increase their conventional fighting capacity) is nowadays considered a significant gain by the Brazilian military leaders²².

The Brazilian participation in POs in historical perspective

It is necessary to provide at this point a historical summary of the Brazilian participation in peace operations. On the subject, there is considerable literature available (Aguilar 2015; Cavalcante 2010; Fontoura 1999; Hamann 2015; Oliveira Junior and Góes 2010). However, it is relevant to ask whether such participation occurred according to some identifiable pattern, allowing the researcher to infer the existence of a policy rationale behind the decisions to take part in these operations.

Since the first peace operation that included Brazilian troops, UNEF I, deployed after the Suez crisis (1956), Brazil has sent military and police personnel to POs located in Africa (Democratic Republic of Congo, Mozambique, Angola, Guinea Bissau, *inter alia*), Asia (East Timor), the Middle East (Suez Canal, Sinai Peninsula, Gaza Strip and Lebanon) and Central America and the Caribbean (Dominican Republic and Haiti) – not to mention the military observers deployed to dozens of missions, including in Europe (former Yugoslavia) (Oliveira Junior and Góes 2010, 415-421). Since 1956, when the country assumed the operational command of UNEF-I, until 2004, the date of assumption of the leadership of the military component of MINUSTAH, there was a high degree of geographic variation of the Brazilian participation.

From a chronological point of view, it is worth noting the interregnum of almost 30 years between 1967 and 1995²³ in which Brazil was virtually absent of these operations, having only sent liaison officers, general staff personnel and military observers to sporadic missions, and a small contingent (284 troops) to UNOMOZ in Mozambique (Hamann 2015, 8). It was only in UNAVEM III (Angola) that the country would return to UN OPs with a relevant contribution – a reinforced battalion, or about 1,200 men (Gonçalves and Manduca 2008, 4). Since then, Brazilian contributions tended to focus on Portuguese-speaking countries (Angola, East Timor), a trend that would change from 2004 with the mission in Haiti. Additionally, in 2011, Brazil would assume

²² See Saleh, (2014).

²³ Between 1965 and 1966, Brazil sent a battalion to the Inter-American Peace Force in the Dominican Republic, a peace operation deployed by the Organization of American States (OAS). In 1995, Brazil would send a large military contingent, of 1,200 troops, to UNAVEM III (Angola).

a leading role in the maritime component of UNIFIL in Lebanon. The command of the military component of MONUSCO, between 2013 and 2015, by the Brazilian General Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz, should be noted but occurred in a strictly personal capacity²⁴.

In view of the above, it is hard to find a clearly identifiable pattern in the Brazilian contributions to UN POs. If there were to be a national policy, a national strategy, then basic questions must be answered: what are the political, economic and military objectives to be achieved? How much is the government willing to invest in such participation? What are the profiles of the missions that will be accepted and rejected? What kind of contribution would be most appropriate? What is the time scope of prospective contributions? In this regard, a growing number of analysts advocate the need for a peace operations policy which would enable the country to transcend the superficial orientations of the declaratory documents guiding Brazil's international relations (Kenkel 2011; Uziel 2015).

Foreign policy and POs

The traditional position of Brazilian foreign policy on POs is situated in the constellation of NAM's third worldism. Although not formally part of that group, Brazil's generic adherence to Latin American legalism (Kenkel 2012, 6-12) approximates the country to the NAM's positions in UN discussions on peace operations. In this context, the principles of nonintervention, sovereign equality of states, and peaceful settlement of disputes are the central themes for Brazilian diplomats (Kenkel 2011, 16). Not coincidentally, Brazil has refused, on several occasions, to participate in POs established under Chapter VII of the UN Charter (Santos and Cravo 2014, 2).

Another basic characteristic of Brazilian multilateral diplomacy is the reiteration of the link between poverty and conflict (Santos and Cravo 2014, 4). Based on the historic demands in favor of greater equity in the distribution of international wealth, and even further based on developmentalist theses, the *topos* of poverty reduction as a means of minimizing the occurrence of conflicts pervades the diplomatic rhetoric of Brazil's Ministry of External Relations in its approach of issues related to POs (Uziel 2015, 267-268). Examples of this phenomenon are the defense of quick impact projects (QIPs)²⁵ and the insistence that peacekeepers perform peace-building tasks ("early peacebuilding") from the start of peace operations (Delegação do Brasil... 2014)²⁶.

The prevalence of the concept of sovereignty understood as a shield against great powers' interventions (Kenkel 2012, 6) is also at the very heart of Itamaraty's rejection of the term "peace operation", which has never been sanctioned by the C-34²⁷ in view of the opposition of developing countries. Although the term has been circulating for a long time in academia and even in reports

24 Cf. Stochero, 2013.

25 In the fiscal year 2015/2016, the UN allocated only USD 24,440,000.00 for the development of QIPs, value that covers all OMPs (United Nations, 2015a, 3).

26 Cf. Brazil's speech before the UN (Delegação do Brasil... 2014).

27 C-34 stands for United Nations General Assembly's Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations.

as the Brahimi and Ramos-Horta, Brazil refuses to allow its incorporation into UN's lexicon in view of the fear that a broader concept such as peace operations would give rise to the dilution of the idea of "peacekeeping operations" (PKOs) and the cardinal principles governing them. This dilution could legitimize the practical transformation of PKOs into peace enforcement operations, which would run counter to the Ministry's suspicion in relation to this kind of action²⁸.

These stances, however, have been gradually modified since the decision to lead MINUSTAH in 2004. Determined by the President in the context of the relationship of the political party then in power with the Latin American revolutionary left gathered in the Forum of São Paulo (Seitenfus 2014), participation in MINUSTAH was interpreted by many scholars as a qualitative change of the country's foreign policy (Bracey 2011; Diniz 2005), since it had agreed to participate in a PO mandated under Chapter VII – taking as precedent the small national collaboration with INTERFET in 1999 (Diniz 2005, 95). Finally, the public support lent to General Santos Cruz during his command of the forces of MONUSCO, endowed with an Intervention Brigade with offensive capabilities, would confirm the greater flexibility of Brazilian positions on the use of force by POs²⁹.

It is argued here that, in recent years, the changes in the traditional foreign policy positions on POs did not occur because of doctrinal revaluations, nor due to the increase of the Brazilian relative power or the greater willingness of the country to project itself internationally³⁰. In fact, as shown by Seitenfus, the prior interest of Brazil in Haitian matters was minimal, and, if anything, elevated Itamaraty's resistance to peace operations mandated under Chapter VII (Lima 2009, 289; Ramalho 2009, 153; Seitenfus 2014)³¹. Therefore, one can conclude that Brazil's policies regarding POs are specific adaptations to particular circumstances, made possible by the absence of consistent doctrines lending coherence to state actions in this field³².

Defense policy and POs

Just as there was no qualitative change in the foreign policy perception on the nature and instrumentality of POs, the same is true with some caveats in regard to the defense policy. It would not be possible to address in detail the weaknesses and contradictions of Brazil's management of defense matters (Alsina Jr. 2009; 2006; 2015; Fuccille 2007). At the same time, it is essential to recognize the interest, particularly of the Brazilian Army, in keeping at least one battalion

28 See, for example, the Brazilian initiative to propose the concept of RWP ("responsibility while protecting"), aimed at mitigating the use of force in UN peace operations (United Nations 2011).

29 See interview given by former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Antonio Patriota, to InfoRel in 2013 (Rech 2013).

30 The opposite is advocated by several authors, who completely disregard the political context in which the Brazilian engagement took place (Hirst and Nasser, 2014; Kenkel 2012).

31 Eduardo Uziel contends that the Brazilian aversion to POs mandated under Chapter VII is controversial. In his opinion, it would be more related to the lack of clarity of specific mandates allowing for the use of force than to an inflexible position of principle. Anyway, the author admits that one cannot say the opposite, namely, that Brazil favored POs authorized under Chapter VII. (Uziel 2015, 252-255).

32 Uziel draws attention to the fact that, until a few weeks before the creation of MINUSTAH, Brazilian diplomacy had been utterly circumspect with regard to the possibility of deployment of a new UN PO in Haiti (Uziel 2015, 211).

deployed in UN POs (Aguilar 2015, 138). There are many reasons for this interest, among which the most important relates to the motivation of the troops (including from a financial point of view); fund raising for training a fraction of land forces (via UN's reimbursement schemes); and the international projection of the Armed Forces³³. This disposition, shared by the Navy with regard to UNIFIL, can be considered a major change in relation to the past³⁴.

In fact, the Ministry of Defense's administrative deficiencies allowed the three services to maintain a high degree of corporate autonomy with respect to POs. The creation of the Brazilian Joint Center for Peacekeeping Operations (CCOPAB) in 2010 was a breakthrough in terms of the unification of training, but did not free civilian defense officials from the burden represented by the ministry's lack of structure. Civilian policy direction on the issue remains precarious, being hostage to the perceptions of the Navy, Army, and, to a lesser extent, Air Force³⁵. This circumstance, in the case of MINUSTAH, has been fundamental in supporting a public discourse which sustains the indispensability of Brazil being the last nation to leave Haiti (Kawaguti 2015) – even in the face of the fact that presently there is no conflict in the Caribbean country³⁶.

The inconsistencies arising from lack of civilian political direction³⁷ on the Brazilian military engagement in Haiti can be observed in the remarkable misunderstanding about the nature of the actions of the Brazilian forces deployed in MINUSTAH and its effects on domestic public opinion, and the structure of the Brazilian Army itself. In particular, reference must be made to the self-congratulatory rhetoric about EB's supposed efficiency in its campaign against criminal bands located in the slums of Port au Prince and the corollary that the tactics used in Haiti could be replicated in the *favelas* of Brazil (Amaral and Viana 2011). Simplistically, some commentators cling to the idea that the pacification techniques utilized by the Army in miserable Haitian communities represented a successful instance of the use of military skills in line with the contemporary theater of operations synthesized by the concept of “war among the people” (Smith 2008).

Despite the lack of basis to this argument, just a new garb of the ancient idea of irregular warfare (Serrano 2014), some military authorities began to use it as a means to provide rhetorical cover for the justification of domestic interventions (“guarantee of law and order” – GLO) carried out by the armed forces, following orders of civilian politicians (Miranda 2013, 69-71). The deployment of the Army in a few *favelas* in Rio de Janeiro, between 2010 and 2012, was the most emblematic example of this trend (Stochero 2012). The 1800 troops utilized at that time in “Operation Arcanjo” constituted what the military called “pacification force”, an expression

33 Sergio Aguilar lists several of these reasons, among which are some of questionable character (Aguilar 2015, 127).

34 To this new development certainly contributed the country's greater extroversion in the twenty-first century and the endemic financial crisis underwent by the barracks.

35 The Air Force Command, due to the essentially land based nature of POs, has only a few of its members involved in these operations – normally being called upon to help with the transport of troops.

36 The discourse in question was basically sustained in function of the Army's interest in keeping its troops deployed in Haiti for as long as possible.

37 A discussion of the need for civil-military coordination in Brazil can be found in Amorim Neto (2015).

which legitimated, at the discursive level, the synergies between the operations undertaken by ground forces in Haiti and Brazil (Harig 2015, 147)³⁸.

Although the use of EB and secondarily of the Marine Corps (CFN) in GLO operations dates back to the 1990s, it seems correct to state that the Brazilian leadership of MINUSTAH provided strong impetus to the strengthening of the relative weight of guarantee of law and order tasks in the Army's doctrine. Note that the creation of the Center of Instruction in Guarantee of Law and Order Operations (CI Op GLO), in 2005, occurred in parallel with the creation of the Center of Instruction in Peacekeeping Operations (CI Op Paz), predecessor of the current CCOPAB. Despite having nominally distinct functions, there is a process of cross-fertilization between the two Centers, since the demands of the Haitian theater impose typical police and paramilitary activities very similar to those taught in the CI Op GLO³⁹.

Thus, to the dubious foreign policy benefits deriving from the country's engagement in MINUSTAH two concrete damages were added: the strengthening of opportunist clamors in favor of the militarization of public security in Brazil⁴⁰; and the proliferation of views that, under the pretext of transforming the EB, adapting it to the brand new wave of "full spectrum operations" (Araújo 2013), supposedly proven in the Haitian laboratory, minimize the importance of obtaining robust conventional capabilities by the Army as denounced by Pedrosa (2014, 71-72). Therefore, it is not surprising that the core unit responsible for the creation of the Expeditionary Force, announced by the EB in 2015⁴¹, is the 2nd Army Division – a big unit incorporating the 11th. and 12th. Light Infantry Brigades, whose main purpose is to perform GLO tasks (Comunello 2015).

Contradictions between foreign and defense policies

The considerations on the perspectives prevailing in the Ministries of External Relations and Defense comprise a problematic framework. On one side, Itamaraty struggles between the desire to increment Brazil's international visibility in the field of peace and security (by means of the participation in Pos), and the reluctance to engage in more complex theaters – such as those that characterize recent peace operations, deployed mainly in Africa⁴². On the other side, the MD is endowed with very limited capabilities to exercise political and administrative control over the

38 The term "pacification force" appears on the Army's doctrine manuals (particularly on the doctrine of operations against irregular forces) long before the Brazilian engagement in MINUSTAH.

39 Some of the techniques, tactics and procedures taught in CI Op GLO (all helpful to peace operations as MINUSTAH): blockade and control of roads and urban perimeter; search and seizure; control of civil disturbances; pacification of areas; security of critical infrastructures; security of authorities; roads and urban perimeter patrolling; escort of convoys. Source: Interview with Army Colonel Walter da Costa Ferreira (R/1).

40 Cf. Fellet (2010); Miyamoto (2008, 388).

41 The Expeditionary Force to be implemented by the Brazilian Army, in the medium term, will have as its main function the participation in UN's peace operations.

42 An interesting discussion focusing on the so called "hybrid operations" in Africa can be found in Othieno and Samasuwo (2007).

corporative demands of the armed forces, pressed between the desire to keep contingents deployed in POs and the restrictions of financial and material resources which limit this engagement⁴³.

Grand strategy and goals to be reached

The first major obstacle to be overcome so that POs effectively contribute to a Brazilian grand strategy has to do with the realm of mentalities. There is urgent need to reframe the complacent, provincial, and stereotyped self-perception about what can be classified as Brazilian exceptionalism (Bruneau 2015)⁴⁴. In regard to POs, this exceptionalism claims the existence of a native form of peacekeeping. This “Brazilian way of keeping the peace” (Aguilar 2008, 10) would be based on “flexibility”, “good mood”, “good will”, “expert mediating capacity”, “humane character”, “cooperation”, “soccer”, “conquest by persuasion” (Silva 2011, 13); as well as on “hospitality”, “generosity” and “absolutely peaceful nature” (Araújo 2013, 22).

The paradigm of this collection of self congratulatory adjectives is based on the success of Brazilian troops in pacifying underprivileged communities in Haiti. It is claimed that the fact that the armed forces routinely carry out civic-social actions (ACISO) in poor regions of the Brazilian territory would make the national soldier more apt to interact with local populations in a positive manner (Aguilar 2008, 5). Moreover, the social extraction of the military, and coexistence with prevailing income disparities in Brazil, would allow the troops to be better equipped from a psychological point of view to face the harsh realities found in theaters where POs are deployed (Aguilar 2008, 3). Finally, add to the above the flexibility originating from the mixed racial composition of the population, and the peaceful character of Brazilians, and one would be confronting a natural born blue helmet (Aguilar 2008, 2-5).

There is no need to delve into the question because what is stated is yet another variation on the *leitmotif* of Brazilian cordiality (Holanda 1995), inserted in the grand modernist project of creating a genuinely national aesthetic language (Cunha 2015; Linhares 1965; Simioni 2014). The academic underpinning of this kind of rationale is highly suspect. After all, how compatible is the “peaceful” character of the people with the fact that the country registered homicide rates in the region of 28.9 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2014 (Reis 2015), which places it among the 10 most violent in the world? Why should one believe operational flexibility and good relationship with victimized populations are Brazilian hallmarks? These elements, if indeed existent⁴⁵, would not result from the relatively better level of troop training when compared to less developed

43 Financial restrictions are, at once, factors of incentive and disincentive in regard to the participation of Brazilian Armed Forces in POs. They represent incentives inasmuch as POs become a venue for obtaining additional resources for operating expenses through UN’s reimbursement schemes. By contrast, the lack of financial resources makes it harder for political authorities to cogitate the deployment of troops in POs – as the decision to deploy in itself represents a considerable financial burden, since UN’s reimbursement schemes do not cover the totality of the expenses.

44 Bruneau does not use the term “Brazilian exceptionalism” but demonstrates the inconsistency of a complacent self-image which makes it extremely difficult to reform the intelligence apparatus in Brazil.

45 The author is unaware of any serious academic study on the subject.

countries⁴⁶? As admitted to the author by some Brazilian military officers, in informal conversations, the Army's performance in Haiti was highlighted more by the weaknesses of the other TPCCs than by the fighting excellence of the Brazilian troops⁴⁷.

It is worth proceeding with a brief reflection on the relationship between ACISO and the supposed fitness of Brazilian troops to POs. Civic actions generically considered are no exception in the history of the development of national armies. The U.S. military has an extensive record of service in this area (Barber and Ronning 1966, 54-61). In the Americas, the construction of roads and railways, communication infrastructure, sewage systems, schools, hospitals, channels, and the development of activities in the fields of education and public health, have all been taken over by military organizations since the eighteenth century (Barber and Ronning 1966, 54-66).

With the recrudescence of the Cold War, and the exponential increase in the perceived communist threat posed by the Cuban Revolution (1959), the U.S. began to encourage civic actions carried out by Latin American military as a way to combat subversion (Guimarães 2015, 2). Martins Filho explains that, in Brazil, the incorporation of the French doctrine of revolutionary war, via EB officers, preceded the U.S. initiatives to repress subversion in the hemisphere (Martins Filho 2008, 45). In this context, civic-social actions would be widely used by the Brazilian armed forces as a means of obtaining intelligence and preventing communist infiltration (Guimarães 2015).

This brief history shows that civic actions are not unique to Brazil. At the same time, it indicates that their persistence today, although without the same connotation acquired between the 60s and 80s, takes place by inertia and as a public relations tool⁴⁸. Given the difficulty of measuring the effectiveness of these actions, it is not even possible to say that they are especially useful from a humanitarian assistance perspective. In the same vein, it is equally doubtful if they generate lasting positive disposition in the beneficiary populations and medium term positive effects (Barber and Ronning 1966, 222-236).

Bearing in mind the previous remarks, what are the political objectives to be achieved by Brazil's participation in POs? Synthetically, it may be argued that they would be the following: 1) demonstrate Brazil's willingness and, above all, capacity to contribute to the maintenance of international stability; 2) project a positive image of the country as a responsible nation willing to act in the interests of world peace, preferably by persuasive means, but if necessary through the use of military actions legitimated by the UNSC; 3) increase the country's influence not only in the UN system, but mainly in the host state and the region where the PO is located – including through the promotion of Brazilian economic interests; 4) show solidarity with the host countries of POs.

46 The better level of training of Brazilian troops compared to the ones from less developed countries is demonstrated, *inter alia*, by the fact that the number of incidents involving national troops in POs is minimum. The fact that DPKO is constantly requesting new troop contributions from Brazil is also indicative of this contention, particularly if one considers that UN officials sometimes confide they want troops from the country in order to replace contingents of "low performance" nations. It is also worth noting that Brazil, as a country not involved in external conflicts possessing a significant Army by contemporary standards (around 230.000 men and women), tends to select its best troops for deployments in POs. The contentions above derive from the author's personal professional experience.

47 Comments made to the author by Brazilian Army's officers, who declined to be identified, in informal conversations.

48 Brazilian Navy so-called "Ships of Hope" are a good example of this strategy. They are responsible for providing medical assistance to the inhabitants of the Amazonas river banks (Colli 2015).

Criteria for participation

The definition of minimum criteria for the Brazilian participation in peace operations could serve as a beacon for the decision-making process in this field. Obviously, one cannot presume to elaborate a long list of conditions, which would severely limit the leeway that responsible political leaders must enjoy on the matter – since they are the ones in charge of setting the parameters of the participation. One might think, however, in five sets of criteria: 1) degree of expansion of international influence; 2) degree of control over the peace operation; 3) degree of risk and military preparedness requirements; 4) time span of the mission; 5) financial costs involved⁴⁹.

With respect to item 1, preference should be given to participation in POs capable of tangibly expanding Brazilian influence. Thus, it is advisable to prioritize POs in countries and regions where national influence is relatively lower. As to item 2, Brazil must opt primarily for POs where its participation could be decisive, or at least very important in qualitative and quantitative terms. Second fiddle engagements should be avoided, although it is possible to have outstanding participation by providing leadership (Special Representative of the Secretary-General or Force Commander), specialized troops of high value, and formed police units (FPUs)⁵⁰.

Item 3 should be considered as an opportunity to be seized. The assumption of higher risks has two main counterparts: greater international appreciation of the Brazilian effort and more demanding challenges in terms of military preparedness. As suggested here, only missions involving the need for better preparation of the troops can effectively contribute to the technical and professional training of Brazilian soldiers – in addition to requiring more expensive and comprehensive materiel in order to minimize the risk of fatalities. One should therefore avoid the simple export of the domestic experience in GLO, as in the case of Haiti (Sotomayor 2016, 333).

The time scope of the missions, item 4, should also be the object of careful reflection. UN's POs, when not patently unsuccessful, tend to extend themselves over long periods. Due to increasing involvement in “state building” tasks, nothing indicates that new POs, as the one deployed in the Central African Republic (2014), will last less than a decade⁵¹. Given this situation, it would be advisable to establish *a priori* the temporal scope of the mission (e.g. five years), with some flexibility⁵², signaling to all actors involved, national and international, the limits of the Brazilian contribution⁵³.

49 The following suggestions are the author's alone, not being related to any theoretical perspective in particular, once it would be hardly possible to figure out for instance how to relate neoclassical realism with the determination of the time span of a particular mission. This contention intends to exemplify the impossibility of deriving clear cut policy directives from generic theoretical schematics.

50 On the participation of Brazilian police in POs and its difficulties, see Kenkel and Hammann (2013).

51 MINUSTAH, a less complex operation than MINUSCA (Central African Republic), is already in its twelfth year.

52 A number of unforeseen factors can accelerate or delay the withdrawal of Brazilian troops.

53 This procedure would have many advantages: 1) signaling the limits of the Brazilian engagement; 2) allowing better planning of the Brazilian participation; 3) instilling a sense of urgency and direction in achieving the goals set by the UN to the Brazilian troops; 4) indicating to local authorities that the Brazilian support would not be eternal, encouraging them to take on increasing responsibilities; 5) limiting the expenses incurred by Brazil; 6) facilitating the planning of DPKO.

The evaluation of the material, human, and moral costs of Brazilian participation in POs (item 5) is the responsibility of the highest echelons of national political power. However, it is worth recalling two important aspects. First, the UN offers a troop and equipment cost reimbursement scheme that covers part of the expenses incurred by contributing countries⁵⁴. This scheme, aimed primarily to encourage the contribution of least developed countries, is also useful in the case of middle-income countries like Brazil – mitigating the costs arising from engagement in POs⁵⁵. Notwithstanding, it should be clear that the dependence of UN reimbursements is an unmistakable sign of the wretchedness of the armed forces of a country. Thus, UN refunds should be seen as an incentive, never as the reason for the participation in a peace operation.

The second relevant aspect concerning item 5 is the willingness to take costs related to the international projection of Brazil. Absent this will, it does not make sense to consider any substantive engagement in POs, sufficing to deploy a few dozen military staff officers or observers.⁵⁶ Participation costs in complex peace operations must be considered as an integral part of a multidimensional effort to project the Brazilian power internationally. In isolation, participation in POs will represent very little. Integrated to a coherent strategy, they can be an important factor – though never critical – to boost the national capacity of influence.

The author believes that participation, at equivalent or slightly higher troop levels than the current one (1225 troops)⁵⁷, in more challenging POs from a military standpoint, could compel the Brazilian government to invest in the formation of a robust expeditionary force – compatible and synergistic with a comprehensive project to strengthen the national military power⁵⁸.

Conclusion

The (modest) place of POs in a Brazilian grand strategy

All the considerations made above indicate the modest but not irrelevant place of peace operations in the broader context of a Brazilian grand strategy. Given the country's evident vulnerabilities, the primary focus should remain on obtaining assets for development. This finding in no way weakens the argument that national power must be as much as possible balanced.

⁵⁴ On the subject, see documents United Nations (2014b; 2015b).

⁵⁵ The deployment of Brazilian troops abroad is expensive due to the weight of the payment of wages and benefits - governed until 2004 by the same law which regulated the wages of the diplomatic corps (Law No. 5.809, October 10, 1972). That year, Congress enacted Law No. 10.937 (August 12, 2004) altering the amounts paid to deployed military personnel in peacekeeping operations in order to reduce the costs entailed by Law 5.809/1972.

⁵⁶ Military observers and staff officers have an important role to play due to fact that they are sources of information on the situation on the ground.

⁵⁷ Source: United Nations (2016).

⁵⁸ In addressing a possible future Brazilian contribution to POs deployed in Africa, Campos calls attention to the need to mitigate the risks involved - particularly through the generation of forces properly resourced and staffed with adequate logistical support (Campos 2015, 84).

This means that Brazil's weakness in the military domain must not last, or else it will continue to represent an obstacle to the development process itself⁵⁹.

Moreover, the frailty of the national defense apparatus generates two simultaneous problems with respect to the POs: 1) the worse the budgetary situation of the armed forces, the greater the incentive to participate in POs in order to minimize the shortage of resources and maintain some motivation in the military ranks; 2) the greater the incentive to view POs as a lifeline, the more intense will be the corporate pressure to participate in peace operations of dubious utility to the national grand strategy⁶⁰. This *conundrum* is amplified by the fact that 21st. century POs are increasingly demanding in terms of troops' professional skills and employment of technologically advanced hardware. The trend in question, *ceteris paribus*, will make it more difficult for nations endowed with scarce technological resources to participate in POs, a fact which, in turn, might generate barriers to the Brazilian engagement.

This scenario suggests that the use of POs as a advantageous tool in the broader context of a national grand strategy will be conditioned not by the further deterioration of the country's meager defense capabilities, but by the gradual overcoming of the deficiencies found in this area. In other words, POs cannot be seen as a kind of crutch by the armed forces. On the contrary, they should be conceived as a foreign policy instrument capable of advancing a set of strategic objectives of the Brazilian state. Although the goals embodied in economic development and increment of national capacities simply cannot be achieved by taking part in POs, they may play an important role in the achievement of the macro objectives of Brazil's grand strategy.

The consequent use of POs depends on the overcoming of traditional concepts, which have as their backdrop the implicit notion of a Brazilian exceptionalism almost symmetrical to the North American. While the latter views the values of liberal democracy, and the United States' leading position as the largest power in the world, as a moral justification for the episodic circumvention of international norms, the former hypothesizes the mythology on facets of the national character (*bonhomie*, pacifism, cordiality etc.) and lends sociological varnish to the pragmatic adherence to multilateralism – since the absence of power assets does not allow another alternative (Alsina Jr. 2015).

Adherence to the Carioca exceptionalism undermines the Brazilian grand strategy in one of its main pillars, in that it minimizes the value of the strengthening of the country's military power – a fact that occurs through the uncritical reiteration of the Brazilian exception and by means of moralistic imprecations against the warmongering of the great powers. This peculiar phenomenon reinforces the permanent emptying of defense's value in Brazil, since it removes moral consistency of claims in favor of the build up of national military capabilities.

59 The I National Defense Strategy (END) correctly mentions that national defense amounts to the shield of development (END 2008).

60 No one is arguing here that the corporate pressure from the military is decisive in the decision-making process. It is argued, however, that it is relevant.

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