



Revista Brasileira de
Política Internacional

ISSN 1983-3121

<http://www.scielo.br/rbpi>

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International Security and Defense - Taking stock of Brazil's changes: a special issue of RBPI

<https://doi.org/10.1590/0034-7329201700201>

Rev. Bras. Polít. Int., 60(2): e001, 2017

Received: April 30, 2017

Approved: May 30, 2017

During the last 30 years or so, after the end of military rule, Brazil has increasingly redefined both its internal arrangements and procedures and its international standing and activities in many issue areas and arenas related to traditional security-related issues.

Brazil has become a full member of the Non-Proliferation Treaty — NPT — and has been very active within this field, like in the Review Conference of 2000, when the New Agenda Coalition submitted and approved the “13 Practical Steps on Nonproliferation and Disarmament”. Brazil also came to participate in the Nuclear Suppliers Group — NSG — but strongly resists signing an agreement based on the Model Additional Protocol with the International Atomic Energy Agency — IAEA — and is also skeptical of the “State-Level Approach”. Brazil has raised its profile on peace operations, particularly with its role in the United Nations Mission for the Stabilization of Haiti — MINUSTAH — but Brazil has also expressed its concerns about them, and proposed its own vision of “Responsibility While Protecting”. While aspiring to a permanent seat at the United Nation’s Security Council, Brazil argues for making it more representative. Brazilian security-related activity has also increased regionally, most noticeably its consistent commitment to UNASUR and related initiatives.

Domestically, Brazil has thoroughly reorganized its intelligence-related activities by establishing the Brazilian Intelligence Agency — ABIN — to such extent that its staff and personnel are recruited by regular, open selection procedures. At Congress, the Intelligence Activity Control Committee —

CCAI — composed of both senators and representatives, is in charge of overseeing and supervising ABIN's activities. Finally, in 2016, the National Intelligence Policy was published — sixteen years after the law mandating it was enacted. Brazil has established the Ministry of Defense, headed by civilian Ministers, and has since then been redefining the internal relationships within the Armed Forces; between the Armed Forces and government; and between the Armed Forces and civil society at large. Particularly, during this period, Brazil has been regularly stating its National Defense Policies and, more recently, its National Defense Strategies, with participants from outside the Ministry of Defense and from outside Government, including scholars and journalists.

Lately, ambitious programs for equipment acquisition and/or development have been created or given renewed momentum, some of them with potentially significant international implications, like the push for a Nuclear Submarine — the first ever to be deployed by a NPT party that is not a Nuclear Weapon State, which creates new challenges for safeguards, monitoring, and verification-related activities. But there are other major endeavors, such as the Aerospace Program, that also have been subject to the ebb and flow of economic booms and crises.

Of course, there are other relevant activities outside of government agencies. Recently, Embraer developed its transport aircraft, for many a significant achievement in the area. As the uranium-enrichment plant at Resende enters into full operation, Brazil will qualify as a major and important player in the international nuclear-energy markets. The Multipurpose Nuclear Reactor, to be developed jointly by Brazil and Argentina, is another significant development in the nuclear field. The defense industry has also seen some sort of revival, and also shipyard activity seems to have awakened from a long rest — in both cases, at least for a while. Finally, even the scientific community, which for so long has been rather skeptical of anything related to “defense” or “security”, has now come to address those issues, and this is now a blossoming, vigorous area of research.

These are only some examples of what has been happening in this area. Still, many challenges persist.

Oversight of some intelligence organizations — particularly those of Federal and states' police organizations and those of the Armed Forces — is not as extensive, and recruitment not so transparent. CCAI's activity varies significantly according to actual membership, and sometimes it can become more reactive than proactive. Some pieces of legislation have become quite controversial, such as that on terrorism. Advances on gender, race and inequality issues in security-related agencies would benefit from more systematic assessment of their extent, significance, and insufficiencies. The lack of a civilian bureaucracy for the Ministry of Defense makes it necessary that the Armed Forces make their own personnel available to it, which is detrimental to the Services, sometimes to those officers' careers, and their inputs to the Ministry's activities are necessarily filtered by the perspectives of each branch — due to long socialization within them, in contrast to their comparatively short terms at the Ministry. The Resende plant has already become object of some spat between Brazil and IAEA, and it is not impossible that issues might arise again. Brazil's resistance to the Additional Protocol is starting to cause some discomfort in certain countries and arenas. Recent developments throughout the world, most noticeably the rampant violence

in Syria, have been challenging UNSC's effectiveness, and even peace operations are under closer scrutiny. Last but not least, some issues about the past are still cause of controversy, as acrimony about the Truth Committees and the Amnesty Act bear witness.

And this is by no means an exhaustive list.

Therefore, this special issue is focused on matters related to defense and traditional-security issues in Brazil since the re-democratization. We hope this will contribute to a more thorough and systematic assessment of many of Brazil's domestic and international changes and challenges, and that it might spur a fresh, more cold-minded debate on them.

The present special issue is in line with other efforts made in order to systematize the emerging agendas published by the RBPI during recent years. Since 2010 we have produced special issues with a high national and international impact, treating issues related to Brazilian foreign policy, global climate governance, the ascent of China, and new approaches to the analysis of international relations in its plural perspectives.

The present issue is of a profound significance to the Journal and its editorial staff, as it marks the fascicle with which we commemorate the closure of our 124 sixtieths volume. This is thus our 124th fascicle, and with it, we surpass the mark of two thousand references (counting scientific articles, editorials, book and article reviews, research notes and documents) published since 1958, when the first number of the RBPI became available to the public.

The intellectual trajectory of the RBPI is to a certain extent intertwined with the transformation and opening of the international horizons of Brazil, as we have sought to demonstrate through the selection of articles that are published in this special issue. All the great themes of international relations since the end of the 1950s and to the present day have constituted the object of intense analysis and innovative scientific constructions: the conceptions of international order, the deterioration and cooperation in the relations between the great powers, the ascent and fall of empires, the evolution of the economic agendas (with regards to trade, financial currents, and economic development), the formation of new issues and new agendas, which became central within international politics, as it was the case with the environment, human rights, and the new conceptions of international security. In short, the entire world and its problems have covered the Journal's pages throughout its existence. In a certain manner, the trajectory of the RBPI is interconnected with the international insertion of Brazil in this period, and it serves as a measure of the intensity of the growing national awareness of the limits which international constraints present to society.

Throughout its trajectory, the RBPI has also been a preferential vehicle in the great debate regarding development and modernization, and about how that is related to international questions. The journal is also considered as one of the main vehicles for thinking in Latin-America and the Global South which is specialized in international questions in their multiple methodological perspectives.

A general evaluation of the Journal's 60 years makes us consider whether a successful formula exists, or at least, what may explain the clear survival of an intellectual enterprise such as this, for so long time. We believe that one of the keys to understanding its success and its longevity

is its extraordinary coherence, especially with its foundational purpose. This is reflected in the decisions made by the editorial teams which have managed it throughout the years, of maintaining it as a vehicle for academic debate, but also for the formation of a tradition in the way of viewing and thinking about International Relations and contemporary issues. Maybe its survival in the Brazilian academic environment can be accredited to this, in times when many other editorial enterprises within the social sciences never reach beyond their initial numbers.