

# Is Brazil Really a "Diplomatic Dwarf"?

*¿Es Brazil Realmente un "Enano Diplomático?"*

**Abstract:** This text seeks to present some reflections of Brazilian scholars on the subject and on previous actions carried out to develop a national project that is constant and immune to domestic or external political oscillations. The research had as a motivation factor the recurrence of the epithet "diplomatic dwarf" to Brazil, recovering each occasion when the country takes a stand about sensitive themes in the international scenario. This work has a qualitative-analytic methodological bias and is based on bibliographic and hemerographic sources. The article contains ideas professed by different authors, especially Golbery do Couto e Silva, Hélio Jaguaribe, and Jorge Calvario dos Santos. It also raises reflections on the Brazilian National War College (Escola Superior de Guerra – ESG) foundation, its inspiration, and purpose. For didactic purposes, the content has been divided into four sections. The first has an introductory and conceptual feature. The second exposes contemporary national strategic thinkers' experiences. The third focuses on the institutional capability to develop a methodology destined to design a national strategic thinking and, to end the text, in the fourth section, are the final considerations on the topics issued and a brief evaluation on the impropriety of the label "diplomatic dwarf" to Brazil.

**Keywords:** strategy; strategic thinking; strategic concept.

**Resumen:** Este texto pretende presentar reflexiones de investigadores brasileños sobre el tema y sobre las acciones realizadas en el pasado con vistas al desarrollo de un proyecto nacional constante y exento de oscilaciones políticas internas o externas. La investigación realizada tuvo como factor de motivación la reincidencia de la atribución a Brasil del epíteto "enano diplomático", que se repite en cada situación en que el país se posiciona en cuanto a las cuestiones sensibles en el escenario internacional. Este trabajo presenta un carácter metodológico cualitativo-analítico y está basado en fuentes bibliográficas y hemerográficas. El texto contiene ideas profesadas por diferentes autores, en particular Golbery do Couto e Silva, Hélio Jaguaribe y Jorge Calvario dos Santos. También contempla reflexiones sobre la creación de la Escuela Superior de Guerra (ESG), su inspiración y su finalidad. Por razones didácticas, el contenido se dividió en cuatro secciones. La primera tiene carácter introductorio y conceptual. La segunda contempla la experiencia individual de los pensadores estratégicos nacionales contemporáneos. La tercera sección se centra en la capacidad institucional de desarrollar una metodología orientada a la formulación de un pensamiento estratégico en el país y, finalizando el texto, en la cuarta sección, constan las consideraciones finales sobre el tema abordado y una breve evaluación en cuanto a la impropiedad del calificativo a Brasil de "enano diplomático".

**Palabras clave:** estrategia; pensamiento estratégico; concepto estratégico.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

In mid-2014, as part of the ongoing confrontation between Israelis and Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, Brazil's reaction to Israel's "disproportionate" actions in the region led to a diplomatic crisis between the Israeli and Brazilian governments. This was mainly due to the statement by Yigal Palmor, an experienced spokesperson for the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, that Brazil was nothing more than a "diplomatic dwarf" (Spokesman, 2014).

Again, in the first days of March 2023, because of the docking of Iranian military vessels in the port of Rio de Janeiro for supplies, media channels promptly resumed commenting on Brazil's behavior and the figure of the diplomatic dwarf returned to the fore (Sant'Anna, 2023). Coincidence or not, the pejorative diplomatic dwarf was once again attributed to Brazil by the Israelis.

In view of this recurring situation, now in a more uncertain and complex world scenario, this article is aimed at presenting past reflections and actions to develop a national project in Brazil, consistent with robust strategic planning and oblivious to the fluctuations and tensions of everyday domestic and foreign politics.

The hypothesis is that a clearer and more explicit Brazilian stance on its vision for the future could rid the country of these jocular comments. Furthermore, as a corollary, the text is aimed at assessing the relevance and appropriateness of the term diplomatic dwarf as a reference to Brazil.

To achieve this goal, this text was preceded by qualitative and analytical research based on bibliographic and hemerographic sources. The textual content was built on the teachings of recent national thinkers such as Golbery do Couto e Silva, Hélio Jaguaribe, and Jorge Calvario dos Santos. In addition, ideas that guided the creation of an educational establishment in the country dedicated to studying Brazil's political and diplomatic destinies were also put forward.

It should be noted that these authors were not the first to deal with the subject in Brazil. Since the imperial period it is possible to see in the accounts of the life of the Viscount of Uruguay (1807-1866) that "his legacy gave foreign policy the notion of the reason of the State, superimposing the collective over private interests, consolidating the foundations of the national interest and professionalizing the diplomatic service" (Souza, 2021, p. 21, our translation).

A little later, the Rio de Janeiro thinker, philosopher, and politician Alberto Torres (1865-1917) devoted himself debate the political and social reorganization of Brazil. In the words of Lago (2001, p. 227-229), Alberto Torres stood out for "his high level of knowledge, culture and solid erudition and demonstrating a great concern for harnessing the living forces of the country, manifesting an original and elevated form." His works on this subject include: *O Problema Nacional Brasileiro* (1914), *A Organização Nacional* (1914), *As Fontes da Vida no Brasil* (1915), and *As Ideias de Alberto Torres* (1932).

In the early days of the Republic, professor, jurist, historian, and sociologist Francisco José de Oliveira Vianna (1883-1951)—regarded as Brazil’s first systematic sociologist—already pointed out the issues of “national (in)solidarism”<sup>1</sup>.

These authors have certainly served and continue to serve as inspiration for those who analyze the construction of Brazilian strategic thinking.

Following this introduction, this work was didactically subdivided into three other parts. The first looks at the experience passed on by scholars on national strategic thinking. The second presents reflections on the creation of the *Escola Superior de Guerra* [Brazilian National War College] (ESG), its inspiration and purpose. Finally, there are some concluding remarks on the subject, assessing, among other issues, the appropriateness of Brazil’s reputation as a diplomatic dwarf.

Before going into the following sections, it is important to underline the true meaning of the noun dwarf. Looking up this word in a dictionary, some definitions can be found:

[...] a person who is short of stature or whose stature is much less than average; small people; a person who has dwarfism or stunted growth; a person who is stunted; shriveled; dwarf; said of or person who has little intelligence; despicable, insignificant (Dwarf, 2009).

These definitions were useful for understanding the considerations outlined at the end of this article.

Another important fact to note is the object of the label. According to the geopolitical analysis described by Costa (2018, p. 514), Brazil, along with Australia, Canada, China, the United States (US), India, and Russia, is part of a group of states with peculiar characteristics called “whale countries.” According to this author, according to the criteria he analyzed, these countries have enormous geostrategic advantages on the global scenario.

Therefore, when discussing Brazilian disputes, it is worth remembering that, regardless of the bias of the approach to any of the issues thrown up for debate, Brazil is a country of continental dimensions and an immense population<sup>2</sup>. In addition, it should be borne in mind that with such a large territorial base, the country has sources of natural resources of all kinds, especially water, minerals and many others that exist in its vast continental and maritime biodiversity. As de Lima et al. (2017) state: “Brazil and its continental stood out in the early years of the 21st century [...]. Its prominence is due, among other reasons, to the extent of its territory and the consequent concentration of wealth in a region full of natural resources” (2017, p. 66).

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1 For Oliveira Vianna, “given the dispersion of the Brazilian territory, the geo-economic, population and geographical differences, and so forth, and given, above all, our clan formation of isolation and archipelagos. He was a fierce anti-individualist—Brazil’s clan formation took place around individuals or families, on farms, latifundia, extensive, isolated holdings. [...] this formation created Brazilian individualism and selfishness, the lack of solidarity among groups and people in Brazil, the lack of public spirit” (Cavalcanti et al., 1979, p. 34-35, our translation).

2 According to World Data (2023), Brazil is the fifth largest country in the world, in territorial terms, and has the sixth largest population.

Once the ideas about the sign of the dwarf noun and some data on Brazil have been established, we believe it is possible to move forward and present a rare portion of the body of knowledge available on Brazilian strategic thinking.

## 2 THE VOICE OF EXPERIENCE

In the 1980s, Golbery do Couto e Silva<sup>3</sup> wrote a book focused on the Brazilian political situation and geopolitics (Silva, 1981). At the time, the author recommended the need to “destroy polarity” and to “re-educate ourselves for democratic coexistence” (Silva, 1981, p. 34).

The aim of these recommendations, according to the book, was to

[...] the creation of a new correlation of political forces, both at the federal level and within the federated states, and of such impulses as to promote, with success and opportunity, the parallel advance of decentralization also in much more existing fields such as the economy, for example. By then, it is hoped that the main obstacles inherent to this will have been removed or at least overcome (Silva, 1981, p. 34-35).

Explaining these ideas, General Golbery referred to the creation of a synergistic effort by Brazilian society to define a strategic thinking for the country, aimed at strengthening what is henceforth called national power. This concept is defined, according to the ESG (2018, p. 38-39) as “the nation’s capacity to achieve and maintain national objectives, in accordance with the national will.” The same source emphasizes that national power manifests itself in political, economic, psychosocial, military, and scientific-technological terms, which are interdependent, although not self-sufficient.

Golbery was incisive about the value of national power as a “decisive asset” for sustaining a state’s diplomacy. He made it clear that it is not possible to have, at all times, the power that corresponds to all the responsibilities assumed by the country. However, it is essential that there is a planned and ongoing effort directing the country towards obtaining the desirable capacity to provide “well-being and security” to society—this is strategic thinking (1981, p. 13).

In defense of a national strategic concept, Silva advocates the need to carry out analyses of the internal and external conjunctures and to formulate permanent national objectives. Considering only the issue of national objectives, which are directly related to the scope of this work, the author defines them as “[...] the interests and aspirations of the national group, with a view to its own *survival as a group*, i.e., once the three basic conditions of self-determination,

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3 General Golbery do Couto e Silva (1911-1987) graduated as an Infantry Officer in the Brazilian Army from the Realengo Military School in 1930 (first place in the entire school). He joined the Brazilian Expeditionary Force during the Second World War and, throughout his military career, held various positions in Brazil and abroad. He was Chief of Staff in the governments of Ernesto Geisel and João Batista de Figueiredo. He has also dedicated his study to strategy and geopolitics, having headed the Institute of Research and Social Studies (IPES) in Rio de Janeiro in the 1960s. It should be noted that although this work is from the 1980s, General Golbery had earlier publications on the same subject, such as *Planejamento estratégico* [Strategic planning] (1955) and *Geopolítica do Brasil* [Geopolitics of Brazil] (1967).

*growing integration* and *prosperity* are assured” (Silva, 1981, p. 251-252; emphasis added, our translation).

In short, it is essential that Brazil explains to itself and to the international system what it wants to be, its vision of the future—obviously, the portrait of the “interests and aspirations” of its people—the only legitimate sovereign actor in the republic. However, Silva (1981, p. 252) points out that in order to perfectly formulate these permanent national objectives, “it is important to eliminate, as far as possible, **ideological superstructures** and **more or less specious rationalizations** with which aspirations and interests of a more selfish and aggressive nature are often masked” (1981, p. 252; emphasis added, our translation).

Finally, General Golbery, in addition to stressing the importance of formulating a national strategic concept that is properly grounded in society’s objectives, emphasized that the definition of these goals must be devoid of ideological and sectarian biases. In other words, it is a matter of autochthonous strategic thinking that is immune to the metamorphoses of the national and international scenarios. Detached from conjunctural problems, it is imperative to agree on what the country really wants to be and to accurately define the objectives that society wants to achieve.

Two decades after the release of General Golbery’s work, at the end of the 20th century, the prominent Brazilian intellectual Hélio Jaguaribe<sup>4</sup> dedicated himself to analyze issues affecting Brazil and the world to enter the 21st century (Mattos, 2000).

By way of an introduction to his analysis, this author described the century that was ending as a period of “great revolutions” and which bequeathed to the new century a “complex and contradictory” scenario, in which “everything is possible and feasible,” given the deconstruction of the “certainties of the 19th century” (Mattos, 2000, p. 3-4, our translation).

It is interesting to note that this thinker, in his peculiar erudition, characterized the new era as “stochastic and no longer apodictic”: (Mattos, 2000, p. 7, our translation). The logical and predictive nature of the 20th century is giving way to the random, casual, contingent, fortuitous, unforeseen, uncertain, and unexpected scenarios of the 21st century. This view was really interesting, since it ontologically outlined the descriptions of the world known today as “VUCA”<sup>5</sup>, “BANI”<sup>6</sup>, and “PSIC”<sup>7</sup>, for example. These last two stand out because they are much more recent and so much vaunted in the pandemic/post-pandemic frameworks of COVID-19 and the revisionist hegemonic conflict of the so-called *Pax Americana*<sup>8</sup>.

4 Hélio Jaguaribe Gomes de Mattos (1923-2018), lawyer, sociologist, political scientist, dean of the *Instituto de Estudos Políticos e Sociais* (IEPES – Political and Social Studies Institute) in Rio de Janeiro and member of the Brazilian Academy of Letters (ABL).

5 A term widely used in the 21st century, the acronym VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous) has its origins in the Revolution in Military Affairs in the United States (USA) and was cited, even in the 20th century, for example by Professor Wayne Whiteman to describe the battlefields of the future (Whiteman, 1998). According to another source, the acronym was coined by US general Maxwell Reid Thurman after the collapse of the former Soviet Union in the early 1990s (Sridharan, 2021).

6 American political scientist and “futurologist” Jamais Cascio is said to have coined this new acronym (brittle, anxious, non-linear, and incomprehensible) (Sridharan, 2021).

7 An acronym for the words in portuguese *precipitado*, *superficial*, *imediatista*, and *conturbado* (hasty, superficial, immediatist, and disturbed), cited by Nunes (2023) to describe the information world that characterizes the 2020s.

8 Mattos (2000) states that: “A precarious bipolar equilibrium regulated the world over the course of the second half of the 20th century. Once this balance was broken with the implosion of the Soviet Union in 1991, only one superpower remained, which has been exercising growing global hegemony, generating a world organization system that can be called **Pax Americana**” (2000, p. 7-8, emphasis added, our translation).

Therefore, in the face of the uncertainty that lies ahead, it seems only prudent for Brazil to know exactly where it wants to go in the coming years. To this end, it would be prudent to formulate a consistent and well-defined strategic thought or concept. This condition is included in Hélio Jaguaribe's ideas, with emphasis on the search for a national consensus for its formulation. It is precisely this agreement that keeps the national strategic concept isolated from short-term political variations.

In the author's view, the 21st century will be the stage for a "new humanism," in which rules will be established for harmonious coexistence between the technical, the human and nature, in other words, a "technological humanism of a social-ecological nature" (Mattos, 2000, p. 9, our translation). It is not difficult to see that such harmony will not be easy to achieve, given the breadth of the schools of thought involved here.

Continuing his prospective vision, Hélio Jaguaribe pointed to a very likely scenario of Sino-US bipolarity and described its impacts on Brazil. According to this futuristic vision, China aims to become a superpower by sustaining high rates of development and maintaining its national unity. It also points to the US's inability to neutralize Chinese revisionism in the face of China's broad advance in the international system—just as happened at the beginning of the nuclearization process in the now-defunct Soviet Union (Mattos, 2000, p. 11-12).

Making this scenario more concrete, Mattos (2000, p. 12) focused on Brazil's unpreparedness "to face the challenges of the new century," due to the reality of its "persistent underdevelopment." However, the author made it clear that this deficiency is not a "fatal limitation." Hence, in order to overcome this deficiency, he considers it urgent

[...] the need for the fastest possible promotion as a national purpose, at the start of the 21st century. The estimate of 20 years as the deadline for the international permissibility of such an initiative at the start of the new century runs the risk of being too optimistic. On the one hand, is safe to say that the feasibility of national development within this timeframe depends on starting the process as promptly and energetically as possible (Mattos, 2000, p. 13, our translation).

Following on from his reasoning, Hélio Jaguaribe stated that Brazilian society (including its leaders) is not aware of the pressing importance of having a genuinely Brazilian strategic concept to face the obstacles arising with the new century:

In addition to its persistent underdevelopment, what makes Brazil unprepared to face the challenges of the 21st century is the fact that the country as a whole, including its ruling elites, is not aware either of the fundamental requirements for facing the new century, or of the extreme urgency of meeting the initial requirements needed to do so, under penalty of losing the still available short historical deadline for achieving the desired goal (Mattos, 2000, p. 13; our translation).

In this vein of thought, the author makes it clear that countries with limitations in their expressions of national power are able to make their viability in the international context feasible

to the extent that they identify their deficiencies, recognize the requirements needed to overcome them and, with a “satisfactory critical mass,” establish “a basic national consensus regarding the deliberation of consistently meeting these requirements” (Mattos, 2000, p. 15, our translation). Here there is another point of difficult harmony, since the current Brazilian political party framework is characterized by a calcified polarity, in which there is little room for dialogue.

It can be seen that the “requirements” underlined here are very close to the proposal of “national objectives” cited by General Golbery, and both thoughts lead to the formulation of the national strategic concept. The same congruence occurs when Hélio Jaguaribe subdivides his “requirements” into four groups: (i) an understanding of the current international system, (ii) the type of country to be formed, (iii) the public-private equation, (iv) the public policies to be adopted.

As can be seen, there is a very clear proximity between these four groups, which General Golbery portrayed as an analysis of the situation, national objectives and the “well-being and security of society” equation. In short, General Golbery, and Hélio Jaguaribe are dealing, each in their own way, with the formulation of the national strategic concept.

Hélio Jaguaribe continued his line of reasoning by adding three fundamental measures for the country’s development to his proposal of consensual requirements. These are, briefly: (i) the adoption of a robust national development program, which encompasses all expressions of national power and defines macro-goals to be achieved within a given timeframe; (ii) the institution of a more representative electoral system, which “ensures, in each legislature, the formation of stable parliamentary majorities, endowed with their own program, party discipline and single leadership”; and (iii) the implementation of a fiscal and government management regime that balances public accounts and is duly synchronized with the macro-goals advocated in the national development program (Mattos, 2000, p. 17).

As for the international context—the scene of the diplomatic dwarf’s sloppy characterizations—Hélio Jaguaribe interrelated the domestic and international levels<sup>9</sup>, prescribing that Brazil’s foreign policy needed to: take care to consolidate and expand the Southern Common Market (Mercosur); maintain balanced cooperation with countries that play a major role in the international system (the US, the European Union, and Japan); create an economic-technological environment for cooperation with other important international players, such as China, India and Russia; and preserve its peaceful stance and opposition to nuclear deterrence.

Once Professor Hélio Jaguaribe’s thinking has been expressed and its prominent convergence with General Golbery’s National Strategic Concept, we move on to a third block of ideas that alludes to Professor Jorge Calvario dos Santos’ conception<sup>10</sup>.

About three years after the publication of Hélio Jaguaribe’s thoughts on Brazil and the world from the perspective of the 21st century (Mattos, 2000), Jorge Calvario gave a lecture on

9 According to the author, the “[...] regime of circular causality between internal and external autonomy will only be possible for countries that have a satisfactory critical mass of national power and appropriate international relations” (Mattos, 2000, p. 18, our translation).

10 Colonel Aviator, graduated from the Brazilian Air Force Academy in 1969. He graduated in mathematics from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ). At the same university he completed his master’s and doctorate in production engineering. He did a post-doctoral internship in strategic studies at the Fluminense Federal University (UFF). He teaches postgraduate courses at the *Escola Superior de Guerra* (ESG – Brazilian National War College) and at UFF and UFRJ.

Brazilian strategic thinking for a regular ESG course. The content of this speech was transcribed in the institution's scientific journal (Santos, 2003) and is the basis for this article. It contains a debate that emphasizes the correlations between identity and culture, culture and thought and the influences of modernism on these issues. It is in this crucible that the conditions that characterize Brazilian thought are addressed.

In his reflections, the author states that "the lack of interest in thinking has become a blunt reality" in Brazil (Santos, 2003, p. 44). And if thinking isn't interesting, it's even less interesting to think strategically, in search of a futuristic vision of society. The teacher justifies this lack of interest based on an analysis of the formation of the Brazilian people, with emphasis on Darcy Ribeiro (1991), in which we read:

The imitation of foreigners was inevitable. Inevitable because they were associated with economic aspects and factors of progress. The great evil was and still is in the rejection of the national, of the popular, because it was considered subordinate due to the tropicity and inferiority of the non-white people. By maintaining this stance, generations were alienated. In these circumstances, alienation became the condition of the white class because it was dissatisfied with its backward world. That's why they lived without seeing the values of the culture that was being built (Santos, 2003, p. 42, our translation).

To define the act of thinking, the author turns to René Descartes, stating that "By the word thinking, I mean everything that happens in us, in such a way that we immediately perceive it for ourselves; so not only understanding, wanting to imagine, but also feeling is the same as thinking" (Santos, 2003, p. 44, our translation).

As for strategic thinking, the adjective is understood as "the art of preparing power to conquer and preserve objectives, overcoming obstacles of all kinds" (Santos, 2003, p. 44, our translation).

In a succinct diagnosis of the last four quotes, strategic thinking refers to what we want to be, what we imagine we are, the objectives we want to achieve. However, this can only be achieved when the capacity to act and overcome the obstacles is present. This is the same as saying, in the terms of a state, the preparation of national power to achieve and maintain national objectives. It should therefore be emphasized that Professor Jorge Calvario's construct shows full alignment with the thoughts of General Golbery and Hélio Jaguaribe.

In the development of his exposition in defense of the idea that Brazilian society needs to break the inertia and dedicate itself to reflecting on its destinies, despite the fads that present themselves every day, the author advocated the creation of proper solutions for the country, drawing on Brazilian cultural originality. It should be noted that such inventiveness also converges with positions that are averse to ideological polarizations: "Thus, we understand that there is no way out, neither to the right nor to the left, only logically forward, which means a cultural way out. That's why there is an imperative need for original strategic thinking" (Santos, 2003, p. 54, our translation).

Going further, the author discussed the disservice of ideological radicalism in the construction of strategic thinking, stating that "ideologies only contest non-essential, non-critical aspects. Thus, they end up using reactionary discourses, that only ratify the existing power scheme" (Santos, 2003, p. 59, our translation).



In the professor's view, humanity's progress in the 20th century was shattered by the ideological betrayal of the Cold War. However, because of its genius and originality, national society is fully capable of formulating its own strategic thinking. Furthermore, the author prophetically prescribed that Brazil's neglect of strategic thinking could jeopardize the country's very survival.

[...] **there is an urgent need to formulate a survival strategy** so that we can meet our destiny. This is a phase in which failure will mean death, so we must survive at all costs. Only by preserving culture and investing in science we will be able **to opt for originality** and thus write our own history and inaugurate a fruitful stage in humanity's evolutionary process (Santos, 2003, p. 65; emphasis added, our translation).

After presenting the individual postulates of experienced Brazilian scholars on strategic thinking, following on from these writings, this work approached the subject from an institutional perspective, using the example of the ESG.

### 3 THE PAST THAT TEACHES

Based on the experiences gained during the Second World War, Brazil realized that the national power was too weak to deal with a social catastrophe on such a scale. To overcome this deficiency, the ESG was created on August 20, 1949<sup>11</sup>.

This educational institution was conceived under the influence of American or existing counterparts in the USA, notably the National War College and the Army Industrial College<sup>12</sup>, as described by Vianna (2019a). However, following the designs of Brazilian genius and originality, the ESG adopted a pedagogical model that was very peculiar and specific to the national reality. This panorama was also reported by Vianna (2019b), referring to Marshal Cordeiro de Farias, the ESG's first commander and director of studies, as follows:

It is necessary to assimilate at this point that the ESG was inspired by the *War College* and the *Industrial College*, but became completely different from both due to circumstances [...]. I always say: we are children of the War College, we proudly admit this paternity, but **there is nothing more different from the War College than the ESG** (Vianna, 2019b, p. 75-76; emphasis added, our translation).

The unprecedented nature of the project began with the realization that Brazil could “become a great power, as long as it had the political will and, above all, generated its own planning

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<sup>11</sup> Brasil (1949).

<sup>12</sup> According to United States (2023), the current Dwight D. Eisenhower School for National Security and Resource Strategy (Eisenhower School)—a name adopted in 2013 and since 1946 known as the Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF)—has its origins in the Army Industrial College, created in 1924

method" (ESG, 2023, our translation). In addition, the teaching and student staff of the ESG was made up of "military personnel from the highest ranks of the three forces" and "civilians of the highest level from the various professional segments of society" (ESG, 2023, our translation).

It is worth noting that of the three authors mentioned in the previous section, two of them, Golbery do Couto e Silva and Jorge Calvario dos Santos, were members of the ESG Permanent Staff. Hélio Jaguaribe, in turn, was a scholar of the thinking that took place at the school, especially with regard to geopolitics, as stated in Lima (2015).

Another important step in the project was the establishment of an association of graduates, with the aim of disseminating the knowledge produced by the ESG throughout the country. This happened in 1951 through the Association of Graduates of the War College (ADESG)<sup>13</sup>.

It is clear that the architecture of the pedagogical project established at the school and its association of graduates converges towards "promoting civil-military integration" and developing an environment of mutual trust between these segments of society, as Vianna (2019a, p. 85) reports.

It can be seen that this intention has been achieved, since over more than seven decades of history, the school has graduated "more than eighteen thousand graduates [...], including four Presidents of the Republic, Ministers of State and other notable personalities from the Brazilian political scene" (ESG, 2023, our translation). In the ADESG system, there are approximately 81,000 graduates from its study cycles and courses (ADESG, 2023).

The ideas illuminated so far about the creation of the ESG reveal a close relationship between what was advocated by General Golbery, Hélio Jaguaribe and Professor Jorge Calvario. One can read in these authors postulates inherent in the proposal to think about the country, to employ a proper methodology for national strategic planning—a national strategic concept and the definition of objectives to be achieved—and to seek consensus on what is desired for the country. Regarding to this last postulate—which is of the utmost importance in the author's view—the proposal advocated in the ESG project to integrate society as a whole and, in particular, the elites of the civilian and military segments seem to be enviably lucid.

In short, as every crisis is synonymous with opportunity, the cataclysm of the Second World War gave Brazil the opportunity to create an educational establishment dedicated exclusively to developing a methodology for formulating policies and strategies aimed at strengthening national power, in its different expressions<sup>14</sup>, or as it is usually referred to today, in a multidimensional spectrum<sup>15</sup>.

In the context of the creation of the ESG, there was a view that different segments of society should interact in the development of this methodology and its use, so that "Brazilian

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13 ADESG (2023).

14 It should be emphasized here that this division of national power into expressions (political, economic, psychosocial, military, and scientific-technological) is merely didactic. National power must be understood as unique and, due to the systemic nature of the organization of the state, it grows to the extent that each of its expressions is strengthened (Freire, 2022, p. 86-87).

15 Gonçalves (2022, p. 17), based on different sources, presented a comparison between the concepts of "multidomain" and "multidimension," relating them to the expressions of National Power. The first concept is more restricted to the military expression of national power, while the second contains the first and is contained in the other expressions of national power. As additional information, the "multidimension" encompasses the space, air, land, maritime, cyber, information, and electromagnetic spectrum domains, as well as the control of the urban, legal (lawfare), robotic, use of asymmetric and hybrid instruments of force, economic and industrial, ecological and environmental, psychological and mental, tools of mass destruction, artificial intelligence, and quantum physics dimensions.

strategic thinking” or the “national strategic concept,” as described by General Golbery, should be formulated by consensus, as advised by Hélio Jaguaribe.

#### 4 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

By reaching the last section of this article, it is possible that the attentive reader may question the fact that the current Brazilian Magna Carta defines the country’s fundamental objectives. In fact, it reads:

Article 3. The fundamental objectives of the Federative Republic of Brazil are:

I – to build a free, fair and solidary society;

II – to guarantee national development;

III – to eradicate poverty and marginalization and to reduce social and regional inequalities;

IV – to promote the well-being of all, without prejudice as to origin, race, sex, color, age and any other forms of discrimination (Brasil, 1988).

However, it must be agreed that these objectives are of a broad nature. Indeed, what the authors described in this paper and the methodology developed at the ESG advocate is of a stricto sensu nature. Something more detailed and measurable in a specific time frame.

General Golbery devoted a good part of his work to the details of the national strategic concept. Hélio Jaguaribe, for his part, considered that “some basic characteristics could be enunciated immediately” for an approximate period of two decades, such as: “achieving a social level of development no lower than that seen in the countries of southern Europe, with a more demanding level of economic-technological development” (Mattos, 2000, p. 15, our translation).

Professor Jorge Calvario stated that “the existence of a group aimed at thinking about Brazil and charting the course towards originality is fundamental,” since in the 20th century “we are still as we were in the 18th century, naïve, dependent on external thought or direction.” Worse still, the short-sighted view that “being a producer of wealth to be offered on the global market is an economic asset; it is therefore a means and not a destination” has not been diagnosed. Therefore, there is an urgent need to create “new bases for the formulation of a Brazilian thinking” (Santos, 2003, p. 64-65, our translation).

In short, it is high time that Brazilian society became aware of the imperative need to reach a consensus on the country it really wants to build. It is time to formulate a strategic concept that clearly, feasibly, and macrometrically defines the objectives to be achieved over the next two or three decades, in a multidimensional spectrum, with the firm intention of strengthening the national power.

It is believable that, once general consent has been obtained on the course to be followed, variations arising from internal political oscillations will not affect the azimuth of the march towards development. As a result, the upheavals in the international system will have less effect on the Brazilian endeavor, since it will be explicit, transparent, and driven by national will and power.

Therefore, it is believed that by doing so, the label of diplomatic dwarf would no longer be proclaimed against Brazil, since there would be no doubt among the actors of the international system as to the country’s vision of the future and the perseverance of the Brazilian people in rising to a prominent position in the concert of nations, following a clear and predictable path.

What seems astonishing is the fact that there are individuals and institutions in Brazil that are capable of formulating national strategic thinking and that this potential is not being exploited.

Why are the voices of individual and institutional experience disregarded?

We have the recipe for the cake, but we don't mix the ingredients.

Decades after the creation of the ESG and the publication of the works referred to here, Brazil continues to stagger in relation to its destiny, always at the mercy of domestic political positions and trends. Sometimes it favors the public over the private, sometimes the other way around. Either it behaves like a country with liberalizing economic tendencies, or a statist one. It prioritizes South American relations, or not. It aligns itself with the central countries of the West, or puts them in the background. Also, sometimes it is pragmatic about environmentalist stances, sometimes it is radically "green." In short, Brazil does not reveal where it wants to go next.

And, as proposed at the beginning of this article, we are left with the task of assessing the pertinence of the pejorative use that gives this article its title. As stated in the last paragraphs of the introductory section of this text, Brazil is not a small country. Being continental and populous, as well endowed with significant natural resources, the word "dwarf" is entirely incompatible under any circumstances.

Thus, it is possible to say that, quite the opposite, Brazil is a giant, in other words, huge, enormous, gigantic, immense, mastodontic, among other synonyms that could be used. But, then again, it would be up to the discerning reader to ask: Is its diplomacy despicable, insignificant?

It is therefore possible to ask whether these synonyms for the word "dwarf" are truly compatible with Brazilian diplomacy.

As a counter-argument, it is pointed out that "Brazil is one of the 51 founding members of the United Nations (UN), created in 1945." The archives of such organization show that in 1947, Brazilian diplomat Oswaldo Aranha presided over the first and second special sessions of the General Assembly of the UN. In addition, "Brazil's Permanent Mission to the UN in New York represents the country in the Organization's main areas of activity: peace and security, sustainable development, and human rights" (Brazil, 2023, our translation).

Furthermore, in the words of a former Brazilian Foreign Minister, Brazil "maintains relations with the 192 countries that make up the United Nations." For this reason, he added, "[...] Brazil's international presence also has an aspect of prestige and recognition, of the attribution of value that Brazil represents on the international stage, first and foremost because it is a country of peace." And if this historical protagonism is not enough, Brazil is a country that "has no enemies" (Giraldi, 2012, our translation).

It should be emphasized that having no enemies is no easy task for the diplomacy of a country that is the fourth largest in the world in terms of international boundaries and the third largest in terms of land borders<sup>16</sup>. Furthermore, as is stated at FUNAG (2023), Brazil's international boundaries with its South American neighbors are clearly defined in consolidated international

16 According to data from FUNAG (2023) and The World Factbook (2023), Brazil has boundaries with ten South American countries, ranking fourth in this regard, ahead of the Russian Federation (15 boundaries), China (14 boundaries), and France (11 boundaries). In terms of the length of international land boundaries, Brazil ranks third among nations with 16,885 km, surpassed only by China and the Russian Federation, which have 22,117 km and 20,017 km, respectively.

agreements and the most recent agreements date back to the first decades of the last century and do not constitute real or latent disputes.

Therefore, would it be possible to achieve this level of stability of such extensive international boundaries with insignificant diplomacy?

Once again, this author would like to state that, on the contrary, the past of Brazilian diplomacy reveals enviable achievements. The legacy that state bureaucracy has given Brazil is also huge. Given its achievements, everything leads us to believe that Brazil's state bureaucracy is in a position to continue into the future with the same qualities as its past. Path dependence<sup>17</sup> leads it to such a destiny.

So why is Brazil the recurring target of snide comments from international actors?

From what has been analyzed in this work, it is fair to conclude that the motivation for such situations is the lack of a clear and constant stance by the country on the domestic and foreign scenes. As there is no national strategic concept, the Brazilian state behaves in a volatile and inconstant manner. For this reason, we believe that it is still time to listen to the voices of experience and urgently reach a consensus in society on the country's vision of the future and formulate a proper strategic thinking. Otherwise, Brazil's death sentence will be decreed...

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17 The well-known Path dependence theory considers that there is a strong tendency for institutions to evolve and behave according to structural properties, beliefs and values consolidated throughout their existence. Details on path dependence theory can be found in Gains, John, and Stoker (2005); Greener (2005) and Mahoney (2000).

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