

The role of ZOPACAS in Brazil's foreign and defense policies in the 21st century (2005-present)

El papel de las ZOPACAS en la política exterior y de defensa de Brasil en el siglo XXI (2005-presente)

Abstract: The 21st century has been characterized by complexity with the rise/consolidation of regional power centers, in line with the characteristics of a multipolar order. Global attention was once again directed to the Southern hemisphere due to the intensification of South-South relations in the geostrategic calculations, including the South Atlantic. In this context, Brazil reinforced its foreign policy on the South, intensifying relations with the countries in its strategic surroundings, coordinating defense affairs there. This article aims to analyze the role of ZOPACAS in Brazilian foreign and defense policies, especially from 2005 onwards after the first review of the National Defense Policy (PND). As a hypothesis, we suggest that the Zone is part of the Brazilian strategic environment concept, having been a priority of its foreign and defense policies since 1986, with periods of greater or lesser intensity of its external agenda. Methodologically, we opted for a qualitative approach research, applying the hypothetical-deductive method.

Keywords: ZOPACAS; Brazilian Foreign Policy; Brazil's defense policy.

Resumen: El siglo XXI se ha caracterizado por la complejidad con el surgimiento/consolidación de polos regionales de poder, configurando características de un orden multipolar. La atención mundial se dirigió nuevamente al hemisferio sur debido a la intensificación de las relaciones Sur-Sur, incluido el Atlántico Sur, en los cálculos geoestratégicos. En este contexto, Brasil consolidó el eje de su política exterior hacia el Sur, intensificando las relaciones con los países de su entorno estratégico, articulando temas de defensa allí. Así, este artículo tiene como objetivo analizar el papel de las ZOPACAS en la política exterior y de defensa de Brasil, especialmente desde 2005 con la primera revisión de la Política de Defensa Nacional (PND). Como hipótesis, es evidente que la zona forma parte del concepto de entorno estratégico de Brasil, siendo una prioridad de su política exterior y de defensa desde 1986, incluso con períodos de mayor o menor intensidad en su agenda externa. Metodológicamente, optamos por una investigación de enfoque cualitativo, aplicando el método hipotético-deductivo.

Palabras-clave: ZOPACAS. Política exterior brasileña. Política de defensa de Brasil.

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1 Introduction: the complexity of the global system in the 21st century

The exhaustion of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the consequent end of the bipolar order led the global system to an order of conjunctural complexity beginning in early 1990s, when the rise of new centers of power and the realization of economic blocs limited the scope of action of the United States (USA). In the diplomatic-military and strategic sector, only one center of power dominated, with Washington in a dominant position, especially in the absence of any opponent of the same level, representing a unipolar order in the immediate post-Cold War period. However, according to Visentini (2013), when considering new trends and economic-technological advances, the order that was designed after 2001 has multipolar characteristics. It is considered, in this analysis, that the global system is in full transition, in a post-hegemonic phase. Despite its relative decline, Washington maintained an edge over its rival allies due to its military and economic advantage and dominance over international organizations¹.

The rise of new power centers and the expansion of economic blocs gave the global system of the 21st century complex features. In this context, East Asia emerged as a new economic frontier, especially China, which is linked to the dynamism of the scientific-technological revolution in its current stage, adaptation to the capitalist system as a socialist market economy, which has allowed it to enjoy expressive economic development and preserve its political structure of non-hegemonic content and shared leadership. Another center is Russia, which, since the rise of Vladimir Putin (2000), has shown internal socioeconomic improvements, allowing a policy of bargaining and cooperation with the West, as well as the recovery of its concept of national interest (VISENTINI, 2013).

The last decade of the 20th century was marked by two profound changes in Latin America. The old developmental paradigm, which went through increased inflation, economic stagnation and the exhaustion of the State as a driver of the national economy, ended in its exhaustion and opened up space for the neoliberal State paradigm. Latin American countries plunged into the 21st century looking for another option (CERVO, 2016), with expressive economic growth at the beginning of the century, as a result of the increase in world trade and commodity prices. However, these external stimuli ceased to have a favorable impact and the region began to decline over the course of the last seven years.

In turn, the evolution of the Brazilian model of international insertion was determined by the governments of Presidents Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995-2000) and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2003-2010) that represented the passage from the Normal State paradigm to the Logistics State². The first supported its ideas and decisions from a neoliberal perspective, the

1 Since the 1970s, the US has been slowly losing its international prominence and through its ascendancy within international organizations, the country has tried to maintain its international position. However, the aforementioned decline is in internal terms, as the role of the superpower in the external and internal spheres no longer converge. In this sense, Todd (2003) states that the relative decline seems to be irreversible in a world too vast, diverse and dynamic to accept a unipolar system.

2 The use of Paradigms in Human and Social Sciences is important due to empirical observation and historical analysis. For Cervo (2003), Brazilian foreign policy gave rise to four paradigms: the Liberal-Conservative (1810-1930), the Developmental State (1930-1989), the Normal State (1990-2002) and the Logistic State (2003-2018). From 2018 to the present, characteristics of the Logistic State are combined with the accentuated Normal

second, with a center-left trade union bias. Thus, the Logistic State initiated by Cardoso, consolidated by Lula and maintained by Dilma Rousseff (2011-2016), was emptied (with neoliberal undertones) by Michel Temer (2016-2018) and Jair Bolsonaro (2019-present), has been the model that defines, with greater or lesser intensity of priorities and pragmatism, the Brazilian position vis-a-vis the changes in the global system in the 21st century.

In this context, this article aims to analyze the role of ZOPACAS in Brazilian foreign and defense policies, especially after 2005, the year when the first review of the National Defense Policy (NDP) was promulgated and consequently incorporated the concept of strategic environment. The research hypothesis states that ZOPACAS is part of the Brazilian strategic environment, a priority of its foreign and defense policy since its creation in 1986, emphasized from 1995 onwards with the first revision of the NDP, with periods of greater or lesser intensity of external agenda. Methodologically, we opted for a qualitative research, in which the interpretation developed by the researcher regarding the case study predominates, since such approach is concerned “with aspects of reality that cannot be quantified, focusing on understanding and explanation of the dynamics of social relations” (SILVEIRA; CÓRDOVA, 2009, p. 32).

The hypothetical-deductive method is adopted, allowing, through an initial problem, to elaborate certain hypotheses that can be refuted or proven by the research. In which the “[...] replacement of the traditional basic epistemological principles of induction and verifiability, proposed testability and falsifiability” (NEVADO, 2008, p. 20). Furthermore, according to Nevado (2008), this approach includes elaborating deductive causal explanations and evaluating them through predictions, based on a logical relationship between propositions, since knowledge is the consequence of propositions that refute initial hypotheses and theories.

1.1 Brazil getting closer to the South Atlantic and Africa

After the Afro-pessimism of the 1980s and 1990s, the first decade of the 21st century witnessed an expressive economic growth in African countries, which resulted in a more active and pragmatic international positioning of Africa. It is argued that “Africa never existed isolated from world politics, but was inevitably imbricated in the dynamics and flow of events and changes in the configuration of global power” (WAPMUK; AKINKWOTU, 2017, p. 11). In this sense, the changes that took place on the African continent stemmed, according to Saraiva (2015), from a) gradual advance of the democratization processes of political regimes and the end of armed conflicts; b) economic growth associated with macroeconomic policies and, c) the increase of elite self-confidence through new forms of cultural and political renaissance. Thus, the rise of a new consumer middle class and the increase in social gains in certain African countries, made the pessimistic analysis of the African continent convert to an optimistic narrative, an “Africa’s Emergence”.

Economic growth in African countries resulted from foreign direct investment flows after 1999, which were concentrated in five countries (Nigeria, Sudan, Angola, Equatorial Guinea and South Africa), whose main attraction is energy resources. In part, investment flows came from emerging powers in the South - Brazil, India and China, which sought to engage Africa for political-strategic and economic reasons. However, the US, UK, France, Russia and Germany continued to articulate their role on the continent to secure their interests (access to natural and energy resources, markets and shipping routes, as well as military-strategic considerations).

In this systemic context, with the strengthening of South-South cooperation in its external agenda, Brazilian relations with Africa were encouraged by the Lula da Silva government (2003-2010)³. Abdenur and Souza Neto (2014b) emphasize that the South-South relations developed by Brazil in this period were instrumental in projecting the country's image internationally, ensuring its national interests “[...] with the purpose of projecting the influence of Brazil abroad, create new economic opportunities and political partnerships, and strengthen national security through cooperation with less developed countries, including in the area of defense” (ABDENUR and SOUZA NETO, 2014b, p. 217).

This research begins with the conceptual discussion based on Cervo (2008) and Milani and Pinheiro (2013), considering foreign policy as a public policy, which has its results in the external environment, however, taking into account that the elaboration process, in which it gathers the demands and conflicts of various domestic groups, makes it an instrument of the State. Beginning with the transition of the 1980s/1990s, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs lost its relative autonomy in conducting the country's foreign policy, as it incorporated the role of the Treasury in international financial negotiations, as well as the presence of several ministries as well as subnational entities that are part of the definition of the international agenda of the Brazilian State. According to Milani and Pinheiro (2013), “[...] if before it was possible to talk about a concentration of these issues on the Itamaraty agenda, today the foreign policy issues, being more diversified, populate the activities of other ministries and government agencies, in a new institutional arrangement” (p. 27).

In turn, according to Figueiredo (2015), Defense policy can be seen in two aspects in narrow and broad terms. The first aspect encompasses the term defense regarding the use of force of a military nature and, on the other hand, the use of diplomatic instruments, which lead States, in a state of tension, to negotiate the interests and objectives of the parties involved, with the aim of maintaining peace. In the second aspect, the term defense refers to the stage of economic and technical-scientific development, the social structure, the efficiency of political institutions, the history of defense culture, its geopolitics (geographical position, territorial size, natural resources). Thus, the concept of defense policy is a perception of the complexity of international relations, that is, how the State perceives threats and conflicts of interest.

3 It meant a return to the principles laid down in the Independent Foreign Policy, which was designed during the government of Jânio Quadros (1961-1964), as well as the resumption of elements that make up the accumulated history of Brazilian diplomacy: cooperative action, normative multilateralism, realism and pragmatism (CERVO, 2008).

It is essential to link foreign and defense policies with the development model, as “a national defense strategy is inseparable from a national development strategy. The latter motivates the former, while the former shields the latter. Each reinforces the other’s reasons. In both, nationality is awakened and the Nation is built” (BRASIL, 2012b, p. 1). It is noted that the link is important, as it ensures national security, understood as “[...] a condition that allows the country to preserve its sovereignty and territorial integrity, promote its national interests, free from pressure and threats [...]” (BRASIL, 2012d, p. 12.), the country is able to promote its development. Therefore, the development model would be the “[...] political project to overcome underdevelopment aiming at technological modernization, increasing industrial productive capacities and economic support for the country’s foreign policy and defense policy in the International System” (MARTINS; NUNES, 2017, p. 191).

In this sense, it is observed that foreign and defense policies a) must be understood as complementary public policies, b) the process of formulating Brazilian foreign policy carried out internally responds to internal and external variables, highlighting a “pluralization of policy actors in Brazilian foreign policy”, and c) this plurality of actors and interests is a reflection of the new international and domestic order, in which a complexity and a new vision of foreign policy, its practice and study emerge (MILANI; PINHEIRO, 2013). Furthermore, this resumption of defense and security affairs in Brazil is the result of the creation of the Ministry of Defense in 1999 and the first review of the National Defense Policy in 2005, the National Defense Strategy in 2008 and the White Paper on National Defense in 2012. Thus, Brazil gradually sought to converge its security capacity (institutional and action) with the formation of a robust national economy (MARTINS; NUNES, 2017, p 204).

1.2 ZOPACAS: from origin to sunset in 2013

During the Cold War, the climate of insecurity and mistrust generated by the great powers led South Africa to promote the formation of a defense organization along the lines of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). From its perspective, ensuring the security of the South Atlantic region against the communist threat would be possible through the creation of the South Atlantic Treaty Organization (OTAS) in the 1970s. However this proposition was not implemented due to the lack of interest from the countries in the region.

According to Brazilian understanding, the design of military cooperation mechanisms could intensify the negative impacts and aggravate international tensions in the South Atlantic region (VIEGAS FILHO, 2016). In this sense, Brazil launched the proposal for the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic (ZOPACAS) as opposed to OTAS, in 1986, aiming to preserve the peaceful nature of the South Atlantic. At the 50th General Assembly of the United Nations, the Brazilian initiative for the creation of ZOPACAS was implemented through Resolution A/RES/41/11. In addition to mentioning the objective of ensuring peace and cooperation between the countries that border it, the resolution highlighted the denucleari-

zation and demilitarization of the South Atlantic⁴. After its creation, the meetings took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1988; Abuja, Nigeria, in 1990; Brasilia, Brazil, in 1994; West Somerset, South Africa, in 1996; Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 1998; Luanda, Angola, in 2007; and the last meeting that took place in Montevideo, Uruguay, in 2013.

In the literature on Brazilian foreign and defense policy and security and defense within the scope of ZOPACAS, a broad agreement on the relevance of the Zone for the country and region since 1986 exists. The main positive arguments (ABDENUR and MARCONDES, 2014a; GONZALEZ, 2014; NEVES, 2015; PENHA, 2011; PEREIRA, 2016; VIEGAS FILHO, 2016; VISENTINI, 2013) presented analyze the geostrategic role⁵ of the South Atlantic region in the global system and the need for understanding between the riparian states, in terms of approximation, cooperation and political-institutional stability. To this end, they use the analysis that the Zone is a vital forum for permanent consultation for the maintenance of the region as such, although still in its infancy, but with clear potential. Other authors (AMORIM, 2013; PIMENTEL, 2015, 2018; RUCKS, 2014; SANTOS SOARES, 2020; VIEIRA, 2017) understand the importance of the Zone, but contradict this position, questioning its effectiveness, which, in spite of its thirty years of existence, failed to advance in its institutionalization, and this would be its main deficiency and problem of origin. The lack of concretely consolidated actions, the “low investment by countries [in] articulation and [...] [the] very diversities of countries in establishing a common agenda” (RUCKS, 2014, p. 156) and the “lethargic stage current” (SANTOS SOARES, 2020, p. 41) would be consequences of a non-existent institutional structure⁶.

In this article, we agree with the first group of authors, who, even with the deficiencies pointed out historically and the contemporary challenges, understand the positive role that ZOPACAS plays in maintaining regional stability and bi- and multilateral cooperation.

The South Atlantic region presents itself as a strategic platform for the economic and social development of countries on both sides, enabling the interoceanic connection with other regions, although these have different characteristics. Thus, in the African context, the Zone emerged as an instrument of cooperation and strengthening of relations between Member States, as well as a stage for dialogue for those countries that have limited influence capacities, thus allowing them to have a more forceful voice in the forums, according to Gonzalez (2014). Furthermore, regional integration represents a way of legitimizing the national sovereignty of African countries in the post-decolonization period, combining domestic and regional issues for stabilization.

4 In addition to Brazil, another twenty-three countries gradually became signatories: South Africa, Angola, Argentina, Benin, Cape Verde, Cameroon, Congo, Ivory Coast, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, Liberia, Namibia, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, San Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo and Uruguay.

5 We understand geostrategy, in addition to the theoretical-conceptual discussion existing in the specialized literature, as the study of “[...] constants and variables of space that, when aiming at the construction of evaluation models and the use of forms of coercion, projects geographic knowledge into strategic activity” (CORREIA, 2012, p. 238, our emphasis added).

6 Also according to Amorim (2013), it is unlikely that “[...] regional cooperation in the field of Intelligence will be established between the countries participating in the Zone of Peace and Cooperation, reinforcing the traditional mutual mistrust in this sector of international security” (p. 28).

Assessing the South American side, ZOPACAS notoriously plays a role as a defense mechanism to ensure Brazilian interests and is relevant to its other two South American members, Argentina and Uruguay. For the first country, the issue of the sovereignty of the Malvinas Islands positions the Zone as a forum to provide support for its national demand (GONZALEZ, 2014) in addition to territorial demands. Uruguay, in turn, seeks energy resources in the pursuit of its continental shelf and, through the Zone, obtains support from other States to expand its territorial sovereignty.

Differently from the others, Brazil took advantage of the opportunity for cooperation in the Zone, which allowed it to take action to bring it closer to the African continent and integrate Navy actions through instructions and teaching in the defense and technical areas. Furthermore, the country has demonstrated a new position in relation to the South Atlantic, taking into account that this region is of great importance for national interests, due to the following factors, according to Neves (2015): a) it is a reserve of large energy resources; b) it represents the main means of transport and commercial exchange; and c) it serves as influence and projection platform for Africa.

The most recent phase of action by ZOPACAS took place in a context of reevaluation of the South Atlantic, in the regional and global scope. The analysis of this historical stage, methodologically corroborates the research hypothesis, which states that the Zone is part of the Brazilian strategic environment, consolidating itself as a priority of its foreign and defense policy, as it is the moment of greatest intensity and presence in its external agenda. The discovery of new oil and natural gas reserves on both shores and the role of sea and air routes were aspects that fostered the strategic importance of this space, as pointed out by Penha (2011):

The same historical axes of Brazil-Africa relations, comprising the maritime zones from the Northeast to the Southeast of Brazil (Salvador-Rio de Janeiro) and Angola-Nigeria (Luanda-Lagos), on the African side, reappear as a new "resource frontier" for the industrialized world. This border is focused on the oil reserves of the Gulf of Guinea and the Brazilian continental shelf, estimated at 60 and 70 billion barrels on each side (PENHA, 2011, p. 216).

The internal context of the South Atlantic countries presents a discrepancy in terms of economic development and foreign and defense policies. In the context of Brazil-Africa relations, it is observed that the new basis of these relations comes from a strategic vision and a coherent perspective that, since the beginning of the Lula government, in 2003, Brazil began to develop an "active and affirmative" position, intensifying ties with the African continent, as well as reinforcing South-South relations (VISENTINI, 2013).

In Africa, Angola's leading role is the result of its new priorities, as well as its national defense policy, which currently rests on the development of the security and defense sector of the State, thus leveraging economic growth and regional affirmation strategy. The country has invested in military training and strategic guidelines so that its Armed Forces are part of the proactive mechanisms of regional cooperation, allowing them to contribute to the positioning of Angola in the region and in Africa. The interdependence between affirmative factors, such as

the control of cross-border sovereignty and the promotion of regional security, also contribute to reinforcing internal security and stability.

At Angolan initiative, the sixth Ministerial Meeting of the Zone was held in Luanda, on June 18 and 19, 2010⁷, aiming to revitalize the activities of the forum. This initiative took place at the moment when the South Atlantic acquired its strategic character once again due to the expansion of the potential for oil and natural gas exploration on both sides, which attracted the attention of extra-regional powers, as well as the increase in transnational organized crime mainly on the African coast.

Subsequently, the Ministerial Meeting held in Luanda was attended by twenty-four Member States. The final document, named the Declaration of Luanda, in addition to reiterating the previous objectives, sought to demand the reform of the United Nations Security Council for greater representation and the advancement of the Doha Round towards greater opportunities for developing countries. Furthermore, the Gulf of Guinea Commission (CGG)⁸ was established as a complement to achieving the goals of ZOPACAS. As a result of the meeting, the Luanda Plan was announced, including the agenda for three main themes, disarmament and non-proliferation, cooperation for development and economic issues (PEREIRA, 2016)⁹. Also in 2010, the Member States met to hold a Round Table, in Brasilia, when the promotion of regional cooperation at the technical level was discussed¹⁰.

The seventh ZOPACAS Ministerial Meeting took place in Montevideo, on the 15th and 16th of January 2013, in which twenty-one Member States were present, while Guinea-Bissau, San Tome and Principe and Sierra Leone did not participate. On the occasion, the Montevideo Declaration and the Montevideo Action Plan were adopted, in addition to the declarations referring to situations in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Guinea Bissau due to political instability (UNITED NATIONS, 2013)¹¹. The Montevideo Declaration reinforced the principles and purposes of ZOPACAS and presented issues that speak to the core objectives, strengthening global governance and reform, disarmament at the level of all weapons

7 In 2003, the Brazil-Africa Forum: Politics, Cooperation and Trade mentioned the importance of strengthening ZOPACAS as a means of cooperation between Brazil and African countries in matters of peace on the African continent. Also at the first Summit of South America-Africa (ASA), in 2006, with the Declaration of Abuja, States on both sides committed to strengthening regional integration through existing regional organizations, pointing to ZOPACAS as an example.

8 The CGG was conceived in 1999, but founded in 2001, in Libreville, arising from the need to develop a mechanism for cooperation, promote the management and resolution of regional conflicts, regulation and harmonization of the extraction of natural resources. The organization represents a framework for political and strategic consultation, comprising the Republic of Angola, Republic of Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo, Republic of Equatorial Guinea, Republic of Gabon, Federative Republic of Nigeria and Democratic Republic of San Tome and Principe (PEREIRA, 2016).

9 Working groups were also created in order to debate similar problems such as economic cooperation to eradicate poverty, fight transnational crimes, stability and security, prevention of armed conflicts, scientific research, environmental issues and the implementation of projects in these areas.

10 The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the International Seabed Authority (ISA) and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) participated and areas needing cooperation efforts were identified: mapping and exploration of seabeds, protection and preservation of marine resources, maritime and air transport, port security, cooperation in terms of defense, maritime security and combating transnational crimes (UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME, 2010).

11 The defense ministers of the member countries were present at this meeting, as for the first time they were invited to participate.

of mass destruction, peace and security, the Falklands issue , with the increase in the British military presence, defense and its strengthening, in economic and financial terms, sustainable development and climate change, oceans and marine resources and transnational crimes, as can be seen in the table below.:

Table 1 – Montevideo Action Plan (2013)

Topics	Objectives
Mapping and exploration of the seabed	Develop capacity to promote scientific research to assess the potential of mineral resources in the sea and to delimit continental margins.
Cooperation in the environmental area; protection and preservation of the marine environment and living marine resources and marine scientific research	Intensify cooperation in terms of marine scientific research and offshore fisheries; Cooperate, exchange information and increase capacities in scientific areas, data collection, follow-up, monitoring, control and surveillance of the coast.
Cooperation in the areas of maritime and air transport and port security	Strengthen the connection between member countries; Exchange information to enhance port efficiency.
Cooperation to safeguard maritime security	Intensify cooperation in the area of monitoring, control and surveillance of ships; Cooperate in search and rescue capabilities.
Defense cooperation	Intensify the interaction between the armed forces; Exchange information on defense policies; Promote joint military exercises among Member States; and, Create a working group, within the framework of United Nations peacekeeping operations, in order to explore future opportunities for cooperation.

Source: The authors, based on the Montevideo Action Plan (UNITED NATIONS, 2013) and Coutinho (2014).

As demonstrated, the Montevideo Plan presents clear and plausible medium and long-term goals, whose objectives involve most of the demands of the riparian states of the South Atlantic, with topics related to peacekeeping and proactive cooperation for development. After this meeting, in 2014, the Pro-Tempore Presidency belonged to Cape Verde, which should have hosted the new ministerial meeting in 2015, but it has not taken place since then. In Resolution 69/322 of September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly referred to the Zone's actions, citing the need for:

[...] biennial ministerial meetings, as well as annual meetings in parallel with the General Assembly, and for the establishment of a follow-up mechanism, as decided in the Declaration of Montevideo; [.and ..] decided to include in the provisional agenda of its seventieth session the item entitled “South Atlantic Zone of Peace and Cooperation” (UNITED NATIONS, 2015, p. 2).

Brazil, in turn, has progressively incorporated actions in line with the objectives of the Montevideo Action Plan, bilaterally and multilaterally. Since 2003, defense cooperation agreements have been signed with seven African countries (Angola, Mozambique, South Africa, Namibia, Equatorial Guinea, Nigeria and Senegal) and it is noted that, except for Mozambique, all countries are members of the ZOPACAS. Furthermore, Brazil signed four international legal instruments and negotiated an agreement with Cape Verde.

It also increased the role of the Armed Forces, public and private companies in the defense industry - such as Embraer, Naval Projects Management Enterprise (EMGEPRON) and Taurus, which carry manufacture and export armaments and equipment; as well as the direct and indirect participation of associations such as the Brazilian Export and Investment Promotion Agency (Apex) and the Brazilian Association of Defense and Security Materials Industries (ABIMDE) and the Federation of Industries of the State of São Paulo (FIESP), which represents groups that support the interests of the defense industry (ABDENUR and SOUZA NETO, 2014b, p. 217).

Thus, the Ministry of Defense and the Armed Forces, especially the Brazilian Navy, have been collaborating with Angola and Namibia in the survey of their continental platforms, offering the know-how acquired through the Survey of the Brazilian Continental Platform (LEPLAC)¹². Also foreseen in this cooperation is the training of human resources in Brazilian universities that, within the scope of the UNCLOS, whose riparian states seek to legitimize the potential wealth existing in the subsoil, in addition to the 200 nautical miles. In security and defense sectors, the Brazilian Navy has carried out joint training with the Navies of several countries on the West African coast, notably the 2013 exercises by the Ocean Patrol Vessels (NaPaOc).

Brazil-Angola relations are historically linked to a shared past with Portugal. The existence of common ties between the countries has facilitated bilateral and multilateral relations in terms of cooperation, especially in the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP) and additionally in the ZOPACAS forum, as mechanisms that open new opportunities for positioning for both countries.

Security and Defense Cooperation in the CPLP became part of the Community's actions, due to the demands of the Member States themselves, especially after the creation of the Center for Strategic Analysis for Defense Affairs (CAE/CPLP), in 1998, for the institutionalization of the interoperability that took place in the joint "FELINO" Exercises from 2000 onwards and for the revision of the CPLP statute in 2002 (RIZZI; SILVA, 2017). It is important to emphasize that the topics of the 2013 Montevideo Plan converge with the program and actions of defense cooperation in the Community, that is, they are profoundly complemen-

12 LEPLAC is the Government program established by Decree No. 98,145 of 1989, with the aim of establishing the outer limit of the Brazilian Continental Shelf in legal terms, that is, determining the maritime area, beyond 200 miles, in which Brazil will exercise sovereign rights to extract and exploit resources existing in the marine subsoil. On June 11, 2019, the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) published, on its UN website, a recommendation in which it legitimized Brazilian incorporation of 170,000 km² of the Continental Shelf area, in the Southern region, in addition to the Exclusive Economic Zone. The process of establishing the outer limit of the Brazilian Continental Shelf began in 1987, through the work of data surveys. In 2007, as a result of the first claims, filed in 2004, Brazil received, from CLCS, the Recommendations Report in which that Committee endorsed approximately 80% of the Brazilian proposal. On August 25, 2015, at the UN plenary in New York, the Brazilian Delegation presented the revised partial claim covering the southern region of the Brazilian margin (DEFESANET, 2019).

tary instruments, a fact that legitimizes the inter-institutional proposals. Furthermore, it is worth noting that, although it is classified as a permanent forum with low institutionalization (and this is perhaps its main challenge), several actions and programs proposed by ZOPACAS since 1986 have had relative continuity, either bilaterally or multilaterally.

According to Abdenur and Souza Neto (2014b), Brazil, by placing marine resources within its defense strategy and its naval cooperation efforts, strives to build a South Atlantic regional identity. However, despite the discourse of horizontality and multilateral initiatives, Brazil seeks to expand its influence to ensure its economic and political interests. To avoid the perception of asymmetries in economic terms and military capacity, Brazil adopted a position that combines distance and cooperation in relation to its partners.

1.3 Expansion and strengthening of the Brazilian strategic environment

Although coexistence with its neighbors is relatively peaceful, Brazil is aware of the volatility and unpredictability that permeate the relations between the States, moreover, the country understands that the natural resources existing in the region permanently arouse extra-regional interests. Still in 1996, according to Martins and Nunes,

[...] with the publication of the National Defense Policy (NDP), the Brazilian State recognized the need to "set the objectives for the defense of the Nation, as well as guide the preparation and use of national capacity, at all levels and spheres of power, and with the involvement of the civil and military sectors" (BRASIL, 1996 apud MARTINS; NUNES, 2017, p. 205).

To ensure its sovereignty, the security of its population, reorganize defense sector, identifying "an 'undefined and unstable multipolar international environment' due to the 'lack of correspondence between the strategic-military, political and economic power centers'" (BRASIL, 1996 apud MARTINS, NUNES, 2017, p. 205), in 1996 the country formulated and approved the National Defense Policy¹³. In the review of the document in 2005, the strategic environment was mentioned for the first time. Brazil visualizes its strategic environment extrapolating the mass of the subcontinent (South America), including the country's positioning across the South Atlantic border and the countries of the West African coast (BRASIL, 2005). For Fiori, the strategic environment is the "[...] region where Brazil wants to radiate – preferably – its influence and its diplomatic, economic and military leadership" (FIORI, 2014, n.p.).

ZOPACAS regained geostrategic relevance to protect Brazilian interests in the 21st century, as the maturing of defense policy, together with foreign policy, provided a new political-strategic vision that permeated the formulation of both. From the Lula administrations (2003-2010) to the governments of Dilma Rousseff (2011-2016), there was a reorientation of the country's

¹³ In the 2012 review, the National Defense Policy was renamed, as opposed to the previous National Defense Policy.

external conduct, giving political-economic density to the multilateral relationship based on the priority of South-South relations. The system's multipolarity provided the conditions for the country to rise as an emerging power. In the Michel Temer (2016-2018) and Jair Bolsonaro (2019-today) governments, a decrease, but not a rupture, in priority in relation to Africa in the Brazilian external agenda, visible changes in the State Paradigm, with a return of characteristics of the Normal State, affecting the synergy between foreign policy and defense policy, but with relative continuity, occurred.

The Brazilian Armed Forces underwent a process of progressive devaluation after the period of national transition to democracy in 1985, as it was believed that the gains achieved by society and by the civil government could be threatened. Thus, the defense sector faced a period of simultaneous disinvestment and reorganization, due to greater participation of Brazil in world forums, seeking to project its influence and form new alliances, starting in the late 1990s. Achieving its objectives and Brazilian foreign policy interests dampened relations between civilians and the Armed Forces (SEABRA, 2014). Noteworthy is the creation of the Ministry of Defense, em 1999¹⁴, which represents a milestone in the country's democratic transition. Internationally, it allowed for equal dialogue on defense and, later, the elaboration of a National Defense Policy.

Thus, a new phase in terms of defense policy began, based on official documents that guide the new policy, based on a more assertive stance towards national interests and concern for the security and sovereignty of the country, with emphasis on the defense of natural resources in the Amazon and the South Atlantic (National Defense Policy, 1996 and especially 2005, National Defense Strategy in 2008 and White Paper on National Defense in 2012)¹⁵. These documents linked foreign and defense policies, enabling not only the convergence of elements in diplomatic and military narratives, but also the recognition of the joint process.

Brazilian strategic interest in the South Atlantic exceeds the jurisdictional waters of its territory and the 200 miles of its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), as Brazilian maritime trade takes place primarily through the waters of this ocean, representing 90% of trade of the country (DIMENSIONS..., 2013). Pre-salt exploration emerged as a priority target for the government, especially as doubts surfaced about the economic and technological feasibility of extracting oil. Thus, this sector was driven by internal and external efforts, in parallel with the efforts to protect these reserves, through adequate action in terms of security and defense. In this sense, the geopolitical perception of the South Atlantic was expanded and consolidated, re-launching the necessary strengthening of Brazilian maritimacy.

14 Complementary Law No. 97 provided for the organization, preparation and employment of the Armed Forces and one of its main achievements was the creation of the Ministry of Defense, with authority of the Minister of Defense as part of the Executive Branch, included in the Federal Constitution by Amendment Constitutional No. 23, of 1999.

15 1996, 2005, 2012, 2016: National Defense Policy (provides for the restructuring of the Armed Forces; synergy between defense and development policy; South America and South Atlantic as priority regions. 2008, 2012, 2016: National Defense Strategy (regulates the NDP, with restructuring of the industry of defense, use of dual-use technologies, integration of South America through UNASUR and Plans for Articulation and Equipment of the three Forces. 2012, 2016: White Paper on National Defense (regulates the Plans) In July 2020, the drafts of update of the three documents were sent by the Ministry of Defense to the National Congress, for evaluation and approval.

The term “*Amazônia Azul*” (Blue Amazon) refers to the Brazilian maritime territory, comprising, as defined by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the territorial sea, contiguous zone, exclusive economic zone and continental shelf. The concept emerged in 2004, when Roberto de Guimarães Carvalho, then Commander of the Brazilian Navy, published the article “The other Amazon”, in which, through an analogy to the continental Amazon, he sought to highlight the importance of the country's maritime space – which, like the territorial Amazon, holds wealth and needs to be defended (CARVALHO, 2004)¹⁶.

The National Defense Policy (NDP), promulgated by the Decree No. 5.484 in 2005¹⁷ was innovative in terms of seeking to promote the development and re-equipment of the Armed Forces, based on technological independence and overcoming obstacles to scientific and technological development (VISENTINI; PEREIRA, 2014). In general terms, the NDP was based on three main points: a) the need to restructure the Armed Forces; b) the desire for convergence between the defense policy and the socioeconomic development project in Brazil; c) South America and the South Atlantic as priority areas for the country's security. The document became essential to the consolidation of the Defense Policy in accordance with the country's political-strategic position in order to preserve sovereignty and national interests. In this sense, the document recognizes the importance of South America and the South Atlantic as priority regions under Brazilian Foreign and Defense Policy:

[...] Among the factors that contribute to reducing the possibility of conflicts in the strategic environment, the following stand out: the strengthening of the integration process, based on Mercosur and the Union of South American Nations; the close relationship between the Amazon countries, within the scope of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization; the intensification of cooperation and trade with countries in Africa, Central America and the Caribbean, including the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), facilitated by ethnic and cultural ties; the development of regional bodies; the integration of defense industrial bases; the consolidation of the South Atlantic Zone of Peace and Cooperation and the continued dialogue at inter-regional interaction tables, such as the South America-Africa (ASA) summit and the India-Brazil-South Africa (Ibas) Dialogue Forum. The expansion, modernization and interconnection of infrastructure in South America, with due attention to the environment and local communities, can establish the connection between its productive centers and the two oceans, facilitating development and integration (BRASIL, 2005, p. 21-22).

In addition, the document highlighted that the country's security would be threatened by the instability of the region where it is located. In this manner, the convergence of poli-

16 Most of the Brazilian oil and natural gas reserves are found in *Amazônia Azul*. According to Andrade and Franco (2018), currently, 89.04% of the oil and 76.12% of the natural gas in Brazil are prospected in offshore fields, with 92.86% of the oil extracted in the country coming from the Campos and Santos basins. In *Amazônia Azul*, mineral provinces are also found, containing diamonds, gold and heavy metals, as well as gravel and sand, which are widely used in civil construction (LIMA et al., 2017). Also, more than 45% of the fish produced in the country is extracted from the sea.

17 In 2012, the previously adopted Policy of National Defense was renamed as National Defense Policy.

tical actions, dialogue and closer ties with neighbors is essential to reduce transnational crimes and achieve better conditions for social and economic development.

The National Defense Strategy (END), created by Decree No. 6703, in 2008, aims to modernize the national defense structure. It also addresses the political-institutional issues that allow the government and society to engage decisively in the nation's grand security strategy. Its launch was driven by the discovery of the pre-salt oil layer in 2007. In general, the Brazilian government desires to promote the development of a proactive defense of the Brazilian coast, based on independent technological development, as well as the dual functionality of the navy - defense of the coast and power projection (VISENTINI; PEREIRA, 2014).

In turn, the National Defense White Book (LBDN), constituted by Decree No. 7,438 of 2012, clarifies the policies and actions that guide the security procedures and protection of the country's sovereignty. The document makes explicit the Blue Amazon Management System (SisGAAZ), which seeks to monitor and control Brazilian jurisdictional waters and strategic areas for Brazil in the South Atlantic.

According to the Navy's Strategic Plan (PEM 2040), "technological independence should be seen as a challenge that must be overcome, aiming to reduce dependence on the outside in terms of Defense means, systems and equipment" (BRASIL, 2020a, p. 59). And three technological sectors are cited as essential for National Defense in the END 2020 draft: nuclear, cybernetic and space. To implement the sovereignty of the Blue Amazon, in addition to SisGAAZ, Brazil has been investing since 2008 in projects such as the strategically important Naval Power Nucleus Construction Program, which aims to modernize and expand the operational capacity of the Navy. This nucleus is integrated with the Submarine Development Program (Prosub), with the proposal to develop conventional and nuclear propulsion submarines as well as the planned naval base shipyard¹⁸. In matters of scientific research in the South Atlantic region, Brazil has adopted two programs, Protrindade and Proantar, the first of which aims to create the necessary conditions for the development of the Trindade archipelago and the second refers to initiatives related to research over Antarctica, such as the survey and exploration of the frozen waters, close to the South Atlantic¹⁹.

With the definition of the concept of strategic environment, it was realized that Brazilian security interests go beyond national borders. In 2012, in the LBDN, this concept was updated, expanding the strategic defense area to South America, South Atlantic and the West African coast and Antarctica, with these territories named as extended surroundings. Mention is also made of the proximity of the sea of the Caribbean.

18 According to the Brazilian Navy, the Naval Power Nucleus Construction Program is of "strategic nature and includes subprograms and projects related to obtaining resources, such as the Submarine Program (PROSUB), the Program for Obtaining the Tamarandé Class Frigates (PCT), the Program for Obtaining Hydroceanographic Means (PROHIDRO) and subprograms related to the maintenance and consolidation of the CFN's combat power, such as PROADSUMUS" (p.83). These programs are able to leverage the development of the national industry and related segments, offering direct and indirect jobs.

19 Similar to them, the Proarquipélago is a policy for research in all of the South Atlantic islands of Brazil and was implemented by the Brazilian Navy, aiming to populate all islands permanently (GUIMARÃES, 2016).

Pragmatically, ZOPACAS has been characterized as part of the process of building a regional identity, in which extra-regional conflicts should not be projected under the region, as the White Paper on National Defense includes:

[...] Brazil also pays, together with its West African neighbors, special attention to the construction of a cooperative environment in the South Atlantic, under the aegis of the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic (ZOPACAS). [...] The South has its own historical identity and strategic characteristics. United Nations General Assembly Resolution 41/11 urges militarily significant states in other regions not to introduce nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction into the South Atlantic. Their military presence in that ocean must be reduced and eventually eliminated [...] (BRASIL, 2012c, p. 39).

Thus, it is noted that Brazil gradually drew greater autonomy in the region, as

[...] Brazilian civil and military policies for the South Atlantic do not indicate a willingness to obtain general command of the ocean. Mapping, research and development programs, along with the acquisition of submarines and the implementation of monitoring systems, point to the fact that Brazil has been trying to guarantee permanent command of the location of its jurisdictional waters. This means that Brazil wants to ensure that no country can interfere with its civil and military activities at sea. (GUIMARÃES, 2016, p. 286-287, grifo nosso).

However, as a consequence of the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff, in May 2016 Vice President Michel Temer temporarily assumed the presidency of the country. Given the context of the political and economic crisis, Temer sought to change the main focus of the Brazilian foreign agenda, which previously focused on relations with the South, by shifting towards traditional partners – USA and Western Europe. This shift deepened under the Jair Bolsonaro administration (2019-today), with the political-strategic and ideological perspective influencing the foreign agenda, which culminated in the reduction of relations that had been built in previous governments in the scope of foreign policy. The bias of South-South relations was replaced by the North-South discourse with a closer relationship with the US and Western Europe.

At the same time, starting in 2011, the Strategic Defense Planning System (SISPED) was formulated, aiming to systematize the updating of defense documents. The 2016/2017 version of the documents brought elements of continuity in Brazil's Defense Policy, such as the prioritization of the strategic environment (South America, South Atlantic, West African coast and Antarctica), the importance of the relationship between defense and economic development, particularly through dual-use technologies, the desire to dominate the aerospace and cyber environment, the expansion of the energy matrix and participation in UN peacekeeping operations. On the other hand, they present some changes and exclusions, due to the diag-

nosis of the current global systemic situation and the failure to mention the budget forecast directed to the major strategic projects of the END, which is linked to the internal economic recession and the lack of stability of defense investments on the part of the Executive Branch (MARTINS; NUNES, 2017).

It is important to emphasize that after reaffirming the prioritization of South American integration and the strategic environment, the NDP mentions North America and Europe as traditional partners that represent areas of interest for the country. The “New Foreign Policy” of the Michel Temer government came from the attempted political change in the regional context to isolate Venezuela and the abandonment of multilateralism. The Jair Bolsonaro government's foreign policy has reformulated the Brazilian foreign agenda since 2019, with a deep realignment with the US at the expense of South-South relations and a relative distancing from South America (including the emptying of UNASUR and MERCOSUR), exhibiting clear characteristics of the paradigm of the Neoliberal State. Thus, currently, the NDP and foreign policy have sought to maintain earlier efforts but to a lesser degree, with a higher priority focus on the USA and Western Europe, whose technological development can provide synergies for national projects, but with smaller budgetary impacts and positive results for the national economy, e.g. through exports.

2 Final considerations

Considering the above, through bibliographic and documentary analysis as methodological procedures, we confirmed the research hypothesis that ZOPACAS is a vital part of Brazilian strategic environment, as a priority of its foreign and defense policies, since its creation in 1986, but with periods of greater or lesser intensity in its external agenda, hence the the reference to year 2005 as an important element due to the first revision of the NDP. The Zone was created to keep the South Atlantic region free from weapons of mass destruction, in addition to bringing countries closer together in matters of security, geopolitical and socio-economic development. Despite the slowdown in the actions of this group of States in the 1990s, from the beginning of the 21st century, there was a new impulse towards fulfilling the initially conceived purpose, but with a new decline as of 2013. On the one hand, the broad concept of ZOPACAS raises questions on the part of some Member States and the lack of institutionality causes their disinterest, it also allows the freedom for the initiative to actively face new challenges, thus gaining a timeless content.

We concluded, *a priori*, that the process of institutional recovery of ZOPACAS is urgent, in order to maintain the South Atlantic as an area of peace and cooperation, in view of extra-regional interests. Therefore, foreign and defense policies are understood as complementary public policies, together with the development model, and this is evidenced in Brazilian actions and intentions for the area that encompasses the Zone. It was also evident in the discussion that the process of formulating Brazilian foreign and defense policy has been linked to the combination of internal and external issues, where plurality of actors and interests reflects the complexity of the domestic, regional and global order and its demands and some permanent priorities. In the sense of permanence, the drafts of the NDP and END 2020 provide that

[...] the strengthening of the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic – Zopacas will contribute to the consolidation of Brazil as a relevant regional player, increasing its influence in the strategic environment and minimizing the possibility of military interference by extra-regional powers in the South Atlantic (BRASIL, 2020b, p. 33).

It is also worth noting that, in September 2020, President Jair Bolsonaro emphasized at the UN General Assembly in 2020 that: “Brazil has been working to, in coordination with its South Atlantic partners, revitalize the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the Atlântico Sul” (BOLSONARO, 2020, np) and in October, in a virtual seminar promoted by the Ministry of Defense, Brazilian Navy and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the resumption of ZOPACAS was a recurrent theme among the participants²⁰. Therefore, since there is a demand for revitalization of the Zone in Brazilian institutions (and this is evident in the Armed Forces), this must be accompanied by foreign policy actions that complement the current defense policy, attributing special meaning to the construction of Brazilian maritime position.

The South Atlantic region was reevaluated economically and geopolitically in the 21st century. The expansion of oil and natural gas exploration has been fundamental to the development of the riparian countries in the region, which demands the strengthening of defense and security policies in the area. In this sense, Almeida and Bernardino (2013) emphasize that:

[...] Maritime security, allied to energy security, together with sustainable development is the central element that united these countries and these regions, which are united by an Ocean and strategically linked by common interests in safeguarding their sovereignty (ALMEIDA; BERNARDINO, 2013, n.p.).

Given the operational characteristics of some Armed Forces in the region, as well as the deficient military strategy related to regional maritime security, these countries become vulnerable to the penetration of external forces and the increase in illegal activities. The US has acted more proactively towards Africa, revealing the increasing strategic importance of that continent for its interests. With the creation of the U.S Africa Command (AFRICOM) in 2008, the North American foreign policy took on an increasingly security bias, with the justification of fighting terrorism in the region and ensuring the security of production and marketing of oil. In turn, the United Kingdom, since the colonial period, has operated in the region through its colonies, which allow it to expand power and maritime communication, e.g. the use of Ascension Island by AFRICOM and NATO.

NATO's Atlantic Basin Initiative, starting in 2010, represented the end of the historical imaginary line between the North and the South Atlantic, as all countries should unite in the face of opportunities and challenges arising from changes in the global system. Furthermore, it is understood that security is the key element that connects most of the South Atlantic States.

²⁰ For more information: <https://www.marinha.mil.br/simposiozopacas/pt-br/inicio>. Accessed on: March 18, 2021.

These powers also share the region with the strategic interests of China and India (ALMEIDA; BERNARDINO, 2013).

The Gulf of Guinea is economically attractive due to its oil reserves and geographic location, and its security represents the most significant current regional challenge. According to Pimentel (2018), the increase in international trade has reorganized the geopolitics of international logistics, which plays a fundamental role in reorganizing the concepts of space, limits and borders in the maritime environment, combining maritime safety with energy issues (especially related to oil extraction and natural gas).

In light of these assumptions, ZOPACAS, CPLP and CGG stand out at the regional level, as the sum of efforts would lead to the development of mechanisms for political-strategic consultation, enhancing a global reach. Even though they were created at different times, the motivations and objectives of these organizations are similar, as all initiatives are linked to the way in which the states in the region perceive changes in the distribution of power in the global system. Although the countries in the region face difficulties in implementing their projects on more solid bases, which is, to a certain extent, a result of the lack of institutionality and bureaucracy of ZOPACAS itself, the revitalization of the forum would help in the projection of power regionally with the progressive construction of a South Atlantic identity, in addition to ensuring the prevention of extra-regional interference in the integration process between the States of the South Atlantic region. An immediate possibility refers to the possible joint construction, and thus endogenous, of a Strategy for the stability of the Gulf of Guinea, between the three institutions.

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