

Aspects of Brazilian geopolitics in the vision of General Meira Mattos

Aspectos de la geopolítica brasileña en la visión del General Meira Mattos

Abstract: With the end of the Cold War, the acceleration of the globalization process promoted a multipolarity in International Relations (IR). General Meira Mattos, as military and political scientist has studied the main brazilian issues involving its development. His concern is about bring Brazil to the same level of development nations in the world. The intellectual always stood out by deep analysis, the military commitment to the country. His literary works have joined lucid evaluation of past, critical view of the present and future preview. Bearing these elements in mind, this paper tried to give a few dimension of the General Meira greatness Mattos' thought by examining the application of his beliefs in Brazilian reality.

Keywords: Geopolitics. Development. Policy. National Defense.

Resumen: Con el fin de la Guerra Fría, la aceleración del proceso de globalización promovió una multipolaridad en las Relaciones Internacionales (RI). El General Meira Mattos, como militar y político, estudió los principales temas brasileños que involucraron su desarrollo. Su preocupación es llevar a Brasil al mismo nivel que las naciones desarrolladas del mundo. El intelectual siempre se ha destacado por el análisis profundo, el compromiso militar con el país. Sus obras literarias se unieron a la lúcida evaluación del pasado, visión crítica del presente y el futuro. Con estos elementos en mente, este artículo trató de dar una dimensión del pensamiento del Gran General Meira Mattos examinando la aplicación de sus creencias en la realidad brasileña.

Palabras-clave: Geopolítica. Desarrollo. Política. Defensa Nacional.

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1 Introduction

General Meira Mattos was born in the city of São Carlos-SP, on July 23th, 1913. Attended Military School of Realengo, seating as a cadet in 1933. During his existence, served with primacy, in the Army. This whole time that Brazil needed, in peace and war; attended, with brilliance on several military and civilian courses; played several relevant functions, using uniform or not, devoting himself to the barracks and schools, until get to the command of the prestigious Agulhas Negras Military Academy and Deputy Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces.

His military career was marked by the collection of national and foreign distinctions, extolling your exemplary trajectory of soldier. Among the many Orders of Merit and medals, the honored, Meira Mattos had justified special pride in the Bronze Star Medal of United States Army, conquered by his bravery during WW II.

Respected lecturer, shared their knowledge in Brazilian and North American Universities; assumed, with distinction, the Vice-directory of the Inter-American Defense College in Washington-DC.

Finally, in 1977, nearly half a century after joining the Army, Carlos de Meira Mattos, Major General since 1973, was, according to the law, transferred to reserve.

He died on January 26th, 2007, in São Paulo, leaving a collection of articles and books almost mandatory reading for all those who are interested in geopolitics and related affairs.

Among his works on geopolitics highlights: *Projeção mundial do Brasil* (1960); *Brasil – geopolítica e destino* (1975-1979); *A geopolítica e as projeções do poder* (1979) e *Uma geopolítica pan-amazônica* (1980). Besides the works mentioned, Meira Mattos has published several articles in the following journals: *A defesa Nacional*, *Boletim Geográfico*, *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional* e *Revista Del Colegio Inter- Americano de Defensa*.

In the case of the Brazilian reality, for General Meira Mattos, threats include the exposed borders, political instability and socio-economic weaknesses. In the solution of these problems, the well-being of Brazil depends, essentially, of national development. Only through the development and power that this development provides can be preserved the safety and progress of the nation. In this sense, therefore, development and power are means for obtaining national security.

2 Fiction State x Real State

General Meira Mattos stated that the State is, first of all, a tangible reality, alive and demanding. This reality are easements arising from your territory, your people and their political and legal institutions, responsible for conform to the aspirations of the people and the requirements of the territory. Defending yet, along with other political scientists, the National State should not be smothered by abstract Institutions or those copied from other countries.

Among the scientists who have treated this matter, there are Alberto Torres¹ and Oliveira Viana². Both have revealed your non-conformity with the abstract nature of the bargain mentality of Brazilian problems.

The thought of Alberto Torres stood out for objectivism and concern for geographic factor in formulation of political solutions and constitutional structure.

His work sought to provide answers through scientific methodology based on actual research of national problems. His revolt against the delay it is evidenced in the words following:

There is no one capable to deny that politics downgrade to a state of disarray and bitterness is difficult to overcome. To order material in Brazil, in relation to the public, does not represent things more than a true state of stagnation, in which the indifference and skepticism from dropping, with a tendency to this sort of resignation that will committing suicide the people (MATTO, 2011a, p. 240, our translation)

Alberto Torres struggled against this stagnation of spirits, that resignation of wills, this inability creator. In his studies, proposed a model of organization, using a methodology for the assessment of national realities, in order to achieve integrated planning. His method of evaluation and formulation of a national policy became known as Decision Making Process.

For its turn time, in the works of Oliveira Viana it is possible see a criticism against the empty mentality of the elites who influenced public life brazilian. From 1930, the geography and the aspirations of the national majority began to be considered. A geopolitical vision of Brazil came back to contribute with solutions of problems, as the text bellow:

I know that some question the concern about brazilian reality – and ask: where is it? Of course you can't find with the methodology we adopt. Because that reality can never be sought in books coming from France, England, the United States and Russia; and yes we did studies about ourselves, about our country, our society, in the light of social science, with objective criteria, using the results of these investigations to improve our decisions (MATTO, 2011a, p. 239, our translation)

Oliveira Viana believed that with scientific methodology would be possible to react against the old analogy of appearances, facing the people as an autonomous collective, structured shape, constituting one of the main pillars for the development of the country.

1 Alberto Torres (1865 - 1917) was a politician and a Brazilian social thinker who was concerned about national unity and the organization of the Brazilian society. In his work, he opposed the ideas of socialism and individualism as incompatible to the Brazilian reality.

2 Francisco José de Oliveira Viana (1883 - 1951) was a Brazilian professor, jurist, historian and sociologist. His work, versing about the formation of Brazilian people, has the merit of being one of the first which endeavored to address the subject under a sociological and differentiated view.

3 The strategic position and the outlook for Brazil

In the politics-military scenario of the globe, by virtue of our geographical position, we are bound to the strategy of two large areas of the American continent and South Atlantic. These direct bindings, however, define responsibilities in geostrategic framework on the planet that need recognition.

Brazil occupies almost half the South American territory, with a protruding released to the Afro-Eurasian mass. Such reality incorporates the country, inextricably, to global strategy for two capital military plans for the security of the West. The first, the defense of the American continent, the second, the maintenance of the strategic Atlantic Bridge, linking America to Afro-Eurasian (MATTOS, 1960, p. 43).

Neither of these two plans has a character only. In both, by imposing physically impossible to circumvent, the country occupies a predominant role. These are the geostrategic imperatives of the world Brazil projection. There is no way to escape the fate that puts, in Atlantic-Africa, shed the line of immediate coverage of brazilian coast, concludes General Meira Mattos (MATTOS, 2011a, p. 43).

Within the framework of defence and continental strategy matters more to Brazil than any other area of the globe. Because there, Brazil must protect its own territory from the horrors of war. Once lost the Atlantic dimension of Africa, there will be no more mission of security, in fact will face the war inside. For instance, an average rockets installed in Senegal can achieve wide strip of brazilian northeastern surface (MATTOS, 1960, p. 45).

In short, it's worth remembering the importance of Africa in the framework of the brazilian strategy. In the field of continental Africa strategy is worth its position of intermediate base for the military actions between America and Eurasia and their valuable energy and mineral wealth.

Brazil, besides having a favorable geographical basis and well articulated, has a people with the capacity required to create a national potential. Meets, however, that the society organizes itself in order to coordinate efforts in support of legitimate national interests.

Geography and geology not denied conditions for Brazil to develop fully. Fit the immense physical wealth put Brazil in the service of brave wills and wits capable.

It is necessary that the national elites have always present, despite the possibilities more optimistic, the great warning of Toynbee (1947)³ to analyse the success and the collapse of civilizations: "After a stage of growth, some human societies have collapsed for the loss of the creative power of minorities, leaders that ends by magic force to influence the uncreators masses and attract them".

According to the General Meira Mattos, if Brazil wants the course of fate of grandeur, must strive to improve education at all levels. Such a commitment will provide the country in

3 Arnold Joseph Toynbee was a British historian, philosopher of history, research professor of international history at the London School of Economics and the University of London and author of numerous books about power and politics.

quality and quantity, enlightened elites, with airy mentality, imbued with the spirit of overcoming it must be the prerogative of Nations (MATTOS, 2011a, p. 50).

According to the idealized projections for Meira Mattos, the country would achieve in the first decade of the 21st Century, the mark of 200 million inhabitants. However, the absolute number would mean something positive by itself. The intellectual preparation of the population wouldn't be essential for the success of the Brazil-Power project.

In Brazil's future, there will be no room for the "colonialist complex", responsible for bring some unfit and poor solutions. The development of metallurgy, exploration and oil industry and increasing hydroelectric potential has proved that the country has the necessary requirements to achieve great goals and develop your potential.

4 The feasibility for the Brazil power

After the surge of development, known as the Brazilian Economic Miracle⁴, has become concerned about the position of Brazil in the international scene.

This scenario of prosperity aroused the interest of some foreign scholars, including Professor Brzezinski, of Columbia University, whose thought is described below.

Brazil will become an important power. In this way will have to think systematically about what kind of international system want to help create. On the other hand, it imposes the need to know more details about international problems and their possible solutions. With power comes responsibility, and that cannot be tackled assuming essentially rhetorical positions. A world order based on cooperation of a larger number of powers might be preferable to bipolarity (MATTOS, 2011a, p. 165, our translation).

According to Ronald Schneider⁵, of Queen's University in New York, Brazil, a country of continental size, possessor of immense resources and rapid economic growth requires maintaining a high degree of social and political stability. The country is following a global and regional strategy systematically increased power, influence and prestige. Moreover, it has taken advantage of its geographical and economic position to engage in a multifaceted program, among the South American countries.

Even in the 1970s the General Meira Mattos drew attention to compare Brazil with nations like China, Japan and India, concluding that the country has the geopolitical conditions favorable to the development.

4 The Brazilian Miracle (portuguese: milagre econômico brasileiro) refers to exceptional economic growth in Brazil during the rule of the Brazilian military government. During this time (1969-1973) the average annual GDP growth was close to 10%.

5 Ronald Schneider was born in Minneapolis, and went to school in Valley City, North Dakota. In 1954, he graduated from Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. He ranked at the top of his class at graduation. He received his Master's Degree in political science from Princeton University in 1956.

Brazil, with 8.5 million km² and a population of 208 million inhabitants, has a territory/population ratio in favor to develop its full potencial. It should be noted once again that the concept of overpopulation is not absolute value because it depends on the positive State's performance in the economic and social field, education, health, among others. Second Organsky⁶, a large population may be as much a social tragedy as an instrument of potentiality. Interestingly, the professor believes that the figure of 200 million is the minimum quantum necessary for a country to be a contemporary power.

As for the industrial, technological and scientific capacity, Brazil will depend on national capacity in maintaining the focus on solving issues that hinder or prevent the full development of these capabilities. The objective to be sought should be self-sufficiency and less dependence on sectors considered strategic.

On this subject, the General Meira Mattos had argued that China, Brazil and India were in full development revolution, while Japan and Western European countries were already in possession of modern industrial technology. The renowned scholar believed that Brazil and China would be the best would maintain continuity conditions of their programs. China would follow the path of socialist development in a closed society; Brazil, in its turn, follow the guidance of capitalist development in the context of an open democratic society.

With regard to the internal cohesion, the importance of geopolitical ties of solidarity in terms of ultimate loyalty to the nation. Modern nationalism condenses on the survival of the nation as integrated group and concerned with the common good.

Brazil, though it is a relatively young country, it has full integrated into a single national soul. Has unit of language, religious belief and acceptance of a racial joint. All people in the vast Brazilian subcontinent, vibrate with the same intensity on the Flag and the National Anthem, get excited with relevant historical events and cheering the conquest of great goals.

In short, the possibilities of Brazil becoming a world power will depend on correct political, economic and social performance. From the military point of view, the General believed that the country would face an international competition in many fields and that would require a military force capable of deterring and provide tranquility for development (MATTOS, 2011a, p. 174).

5 The national power second Meira Mattos

After World War I, the great powers became worried in conduct research more objective and less rhetoric aimed at conceptualization and measurement of power. Studies of this nature were, until then, restrict to the specialists in political science of the universi-

⁶ Abramo Fimo Kenneth Organski (12 May 1923 – 6 March 1998) was a professor of Political Science at University of Michigan.

ties, which developed with admirable erudition, but away from reality agitated by increasingly frequent conflicts and dominated by new weapons and instruments of psychological pressure.

The military power has lost little by little its importance in case of international conflicts; while the economic and psychosocial expressions of national power gained prominence. Political power, almost always dragged by the military during the war, began to assume a leadership role by being the only one able to coordinate the three expressions: psychosocial, economic, and military.

In the early years of the activity of the Superior School of War⁸ issued a initial conceptualization of power that has allowed the development of studies.

“National Power is the integrated expression of every means that the nation has for the moment considered to promote in the infield and in external and national objectives, despite the existence of antagonism”.

It is to be noted that the concept of power of Superior School of War⁷ which in general terms is similar to that of similar schools in the Western world, when says that “power is the integrated expression of all means.”, suggests the amount of means, because the word “means” induces the idea of material resources. Hence the simplification that some are saying that “power is the sum of means at the disposal of a nation”.

For General Meira Mattos, the power is defined as the ability of someone to impose your will on others, both psychologically as physically, and this concept is expanded to include a thorough contribution of Brazilian power possibilities relation to other big States.

The assessment of relative national power is made by Meira Mattos using the following formula: $Pp = (C+E+M) \times (S+W+P)$. In that:

Pp = noticeable power of States

C = critical mass-population and territory

E = economic capacity

M = military capacity

S = state's strategic concept W = will

P = ability of persuasion

Observing Meira Mattos' thoughts is possible to note the ideathat the ends do not justify the means, besides the interdependence between the principles of ethics and the exercise of power requires the engagement in a process of continuous evaluation (MAT^TOS, 1977, p. 31).

In the light of these ideas, Meira Mattos supporting democratic processes, arguing that free societies are ruled by instruments of persuasion, based on the conviction, in spontaneous participation and the sense of social obligation; while in the totalitarian, closed societies, usually occur the instruments of coercion and revitalization of charismatic myths (MAT^TOS, 2011c, p. 231).

⁷ The Superior School of War was created in August 1949 and it is an Institute of high studies of Defense Policy and Strategy. The School aims to develop and consolidate the knowledge required for the performance of functions of direction and advice to the national defense planning.

However, associated with those feelings are their democratic freedom and restrictions should be accompanied by development authority. The General described it would be necessary to use moderate authority to stimulate the modernization of Brazilian society.

Development, said Meira Mattos, results of the modernization of national sectors, such as: technology, social benefits, citizens' participation, industrial production, government efficiency and the national territory integration. "Brazil has the resources, the will of the people and the leadership necessary to be among the most prosperous nations of the globe" (MATTOS, 1975, p. 101-102, our translation).

Nonetheless, the ubiquitous theme of power predominates in the work of Meira Mattos and stresses the importance of the development to the achievement of national goals. The development leads to power and without power every society becomes an inert body, unwilling, unable to satisfy its own reason.

In short, leaving the table of political realism, Meira Mattos described the security problems of Brazil, prescribing as a medicine, a strong dose of power. For this, the General had recommended that the solutions were based on geographical realities: "[...] the territory makes the life of a State and limited their aspirations. Geography conditions, making it difficult, inspire, stimulate and finally present a challenge. It forces a human group to react to geographical conditions: the group reacts and triumphs or is destroyed" (MATTOS, 1977, p.105-106, our translation).

According to the General, national greatness is revealed when the nation mobilizes the power and the will to meet the challenges of your environment. Geographically unfavorable regions as existing in Brazil, challenge the character of the nation. On the other hand, the overcoming of old biases and unfavorable environmental conditions will restore hope, ideals and national redemption.

Meira Mattos held still emphatically that Brazil had the conditions to aspire to a place among the great powers of the world, a theme that is repeated throughout its work. Judges also that Brazil will perform this jump to achieve power and fully developed within the Western influence of "democracy with authority" (MATTOS, 1975, p. 71-73, our translation).

Second Meira Mattos, the development of Brazil would entail the burden of great responsibility in relation to aspects of external security. As a result, the country should develop your military might in order to protect national interests, which, in terms of economy and geostrategic will get world range.

The new position of Brazil as power would require the consolidation and expansion of the strategic role of the country, especially in two areas of interest: the South Atlantic and the Amazon Basin. For the renowned geopolitics, the fate of the country would be inevitably conditioned by both continental influences how much. As a result, the general recommended a careful study of the situation, including the positions to be occupied in case of threat and which international alliances can be performed.

Alongside this need for military security in the region of the South Atlantic, Meira Mattos saw the need to ensure the maintenance of maritime trade access to external markets. For this, advocated an ambitious program of construction of merchant ships and war. With the

protected trade routes, in addition to the exploration of new resources from the continental shelf and maritime band, the general stated that the Brazilian would make the South Atlantic development one of the most prosperous regions of the world (MATTOS, 1977, p. 119 - 123). Meira Mattos believed that the power of Brazil over the coming decades would be insufficient to overcome the threats to security in the region referenced above. Recommended a joint Brazil-United States naval presence, since the two allies have similar strategic interests in the Atlantic, as well as the creation of a community of Southern Cone or a Treaty of the Organization of the South Atlantic.

Second Mattos, the modern concept of national power should cover not only the strength of a material State, but also your ability to influence the conduct of events. There is no doubt that these two values: power-force (material) and power of influence (psychological) are interdependent. Without the power-strength there is the power of influence, but without this, empties the power-strength. Both, in modern conflicts, are subject to national and multinational influences of pressure and back pressure.

The outcome of the Vietnam War well worth as proof that the power-strength is not enough. The United States lacked the capacity to influence, not only in order to convince its allies to the righteousness of its cause, but, mainly, in the mind of their own. Didn't matter the superiority of overwhelming power in the material field, when in the psychological area war was lost by the American Government's inability to manage issues that explain the real necessity of that conflict.

6 General Meira Mattos and the Amazon

Initially we highlight that General Meira Mattos never served in Amazon. At that time were few opportunities in career offered to do it, the effective Northern Army came to little more than a thousand men. The strategic design, then in force, made the southern region, and the operating device was articulated to face countries included in Platinum compounds, inheritance of confrontation geo-historical between the Portuguese and Spanish colonizations around the Silver Basin.

His careful sensitivity Amazon's issues was formed from the combination of factors, including: the broad vision of the world, wide and deep general culture, dedication to geopolitics and the themes of national interest. The contact with people who shared a love for Amazon-region's like General Rodrigo Otávio, Military Amazon Commander, between July 1968 and March 1970, also contributed.

Among the matters related to the Amazon, the development deserved most attention. Meira Mattos identified greed by foreign Nations or international organizations, due to sparse population and unexplored mineral wealth as the greatest problem. Responding to this geographic threat, Mattos dismissed foreign immigration, as a solution, recommended the increase of the local population. Other aspects that deserved attention were the factors of internal rebellion and military blockade of coastal stations and the mouth of the Amazon, additional strategic concerns to Brazil.

The dependence of the coast can be summarized: this policy of continentality, to be effective, will need to create an interior less dependent on maritime trade. Will have to ensure a certain level of economic interdependence to the regions connected to large continental masses, favoring the creation of a self-sufficient society (MATTOS, 1980, p. 136, 148, 166).

The prospect of great wealth also aroused the interest of Amazon by Meira Mattos. According to the General, the discoveries of manganese, iron ore, copper and uranium would make possible the development and settlement of the interior, resulting in the discovery of other new riches and the expansion of a latent potential in something real.

The benefits from the development would extend to all Amazon countries representing, truly, a gain for all of South America.

Finally, Meira Mattos imagined the Amazon basin as the core of South America.

Stated that in Brazil the heart of the problem of awakening of the continent would be centered on the Amazon. Held that Brazil enjoys a privileged position by the fact of owning its territory adjacent to the course of exit to the ocean.

For this development, the General held that the orientation of the Brazil's brotherly exchange without isolating itself from their neighbors of Spanish language.

Our diplomacy readjusted, in recent years, our strategic lines, lending greater importance to the policy of rapprochement with our continental neighbours. We strengthened our ties with South American Nations, through regional and subregional agencies. We began the mobilization of the major Nations of the Amazon basin to a Treaty of Cooperation. And, finally, we alerted our neighbours for the importance of a readjustment with the Brazil for all benefits (MATTOS, 1980, p. 139, our translation).

Ranking as a challenge, the efforts on behalf of the Amazonian development, Meira Mattos considered the Brazil's onslaught to the West similar to the United States, Russia and Australia. These Nations sought to conquer and occupy your own territory, integrating the maritime and continental portions completely. This process revealed the importance to adopt an effective transport strategy, ability to materialize projects within the context of geography and a political determination of the State to consider these issues. This determination does not translate in the work of a Government, but in the line of continuity of national projects, whose course maintains a path consistent with the future, independent of the politicians who are in power.

The national civic consciousness gives Amazon the character of one of the most indisputable symbols of our sovereignty. However, in the 21st Century, Brazil has not completed internal expansion, and half of its territory waiting to be occupied and integrated into the national society. Nowadays, the heart of the problem of the awakening of continentality is centered on Amazon. Thus, the General summed up this issue, whose geopolitical significance seems even misunderstood by some authorities.

In a world where, in the year 2030, the population will have increased by two billion inhabitants and will be consuming twice as many natural resources, this unfathomable source of nature has to be clearly associated with the Brazilian sovereignty in the imagination of the international public opinion, avid for questioning our ability to manage what is already considered as a world heritage. It is essential and urgent task, because Amazon has at least three important roles to play (VILLAS BÔAS, 2013, p. 9).

The first will be to provoke the elevation, in exponential scale, national power, from the time when the country is equipped to make institutional and materially the rational exploitation of its natural resources, which still await a complete identification, delineation and quantification.

The second is the large contribution to the natural vocation of continental leadership, which we can not shirk. The Brazilian Amazon is bordered by seven countries, has access to the Atlantic and Pacific oceans and connects with the Bolivian Altiplano, the Silver Basin and the Orinoco and, in Brazil, with the Northeast and the Midwest.

The full sovereignty of Brazil in Amazon is precondition to the integrationist project. This process, in so far as they advance through the construction of a vital transport and communications infrastructure, will lead to the exponential growth of the importance of the Amazon in the continental context. Is predictable that cities like Belem and Manaus, because their location, the first as a gateway to dense river mesh and the second for the central geographic position, will consolidate itself as industrial, logistics and services.

The third, finally, stems from the condition shown by Amazon to house answers and solutions to some of the main problems afflicting humanity: climate change, environment, renewable energy and shortage of fresh water.

As known, General Meira Mattos died in 2007, twenty seven years after the first edition of "A Pan-Amazonian Geopolitics". It is possible that has accompanied the demise of everything he saw and somehow helped to build. Probably experienced the same nonconformity that assaults us to see so much potential for natural resources being wasted, unassisted and isolated population, Indians being victims, rather than agents of the processes that concern them, and environment being degraded (VILLAS BÔAS, 2013, p. 31).

Maybe, what it would cost to understand today, would be the fact that-in both the establishment of internal development plans, as in collective actions among the South American countries, the geopolitics continues to be disregarded. The volatile motivations still have presided over these relationships and that the historical teachings of the Amazonian epic have been ignored till today.

7 Final considerations

There is a reality that cannot be ignored in the quest for modernization and growth of the Nation. The development of a country the size of Brazil falls on the exercise of power. This is involuntary phenomenon and even inevitable in some cases.

According to Meira Mattos, development of Brazil will result in burden of major responsibilities, especially the field of external security. Brazil has the conditions to become a world power in the 21st century, independent of its vocation or taste for power. The nation should be prepared to exercise that power and protect national interests, economic and geostrategic dimensions will acquire a world range.

Ensuring security will be more effective if Brazil being able to strengthen continental and extra-continental alliances in order to defend ideas and common interests. In the context of these alliances, it is necessary to consider the weight of the economy and the geostrategic position of Brazil.

The preservation of peace on the continent and in the world should be a concern of brazilian foreign policy. The stability and tranquility of the world represent the fulfillment of the country's pacifist vocation and the security environment essential to social and economic progress.

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