

# Where is the extraregional deterrence strategy for South America?

*¿Por dónde va la estrategia de disuasión extrarregional para América del Sur?*

**Abstract:** This article aims to discuss the idea of “extra-regional deterrence,” adopted by Brazil as a model of cooperative defense for South America at the end of the first decade of this century, in a context marked by efforts towards regional integration. After nearly two decades—and considering the current regional environment of fragmentation—this article discusses the viability of that proposal. To this end, based on discourses and documentary production from the period, we will analyze the Brazilian proposal, dividing the discussion into four sections. In the first, we describe the process of “South Americanization” of the Brazilian military agenda. In the second, we present the emergence and dissemination of the idea of “extraregional deterrence.” The third section discusses the regional context of the past decade, marked by regional fragmentation. Finally, the fourth section analyzes the current viability of Brazil’s proposal, considering the context of power struggles among major powers in the region.

**Keywords:** Extra-regional Deterrence, South America, Defense.

**Resumen:** Este artículo tiene el objetivo de discutir la idea de “disuasión extrarregional”, que Brasil adoptó como modelo de defensa cooperativa para América del Sur a finales de la primera década de este siglo, en un contexto marcado por la búsqueda de la integración regional. Casi dos décadas después, y teniendo en cuenta el actual entorno regional de fragmentación, nos interesa aquí discutir el grado de viabilidad de esa propuesta. Para ello, a partir de discursos y producción documental de la época, vamos a analizar la propuesta brasileña, dividiendo la discusión en cuatro secciones. En la primera sección, vamos a describir el proceso de “sudamericanización” de la agenda brasileña en el campo militar. En la segunda, vamos a presentar el surgimiento y la difusión de la idea de “disuasión extrarregional”. En la tercera, vamos a discutir el contexto regional de la última década, marcado por la fragmentación regional. Y finalmente, en la cuarta sección, vamos a analizar la viabilidad actual de la idea brasileña, teniendo en cuenta el contexto de lucha de poder entre las grandes potencias presente en la región.

**Palabras clave:** Disuasión Extraregional, América del Sur, Defensa.

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Received: Jan. 29, 2025

Accepted: Jul. 28, 2025

COLEÇÃO MEIRA MATTOS

ISSN on-line 2316-4891 / ISSN print 2316-4833

<http://ebrevistas.eb.mil.br/index.php/RMM/index>



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## 1 INTRODUCTION: THE PROCESS OF “SOUTH AMERICANIZATION” OF THE BRAZILIAN AGENDA IN THE MILITARY FIELD

For a long time, Brazilian geopoliticians have pointed out the advantages of cooperation and the process of South American integration for Brazil's strategic interests, despite geographical constraints that have historically generated antagonisms and, consequently, a predisposition to isolation (Castro, 1994; Mattos, 1977; Travassos, 1938). The geopolitical gains of this integration are summarized by General Carlos de Meira Mattos (1977, p. 18, our translation) in the following terms:

Each of our countries will incorporate new and valuable geographic extensions into its economic frontier, tearing them away from the millennia-old slumber that has hampered them. Our South America will acquire a new personality, awakening to the era of its continental unity; it will significantly increase in power.

The fact is that the process of “South Americanization” of Brazilian foreign policy only began in the 1970s with two geopolitical maneuvers: the Amazon Cooperation Treaty (TCA) in the Amazon Basin, and the strategic rapprochement with the Southern Cone countries in the La Plata Basin (Medeiros Filho, 2017). Since then, a series of Brazilian initiatives for regional cooperation have been observed in various areas, especially in the political, economic, and infrastructure fields.

From a military perspective, the debate is more recent. Among Brazilian thinkers, we highlight the ideas of Admiral Armando Vidigal, published in the 1980s. His vision was that rapprochement between Brazil and Argentina would be fundamental to the construction of a regional bloc, which would bring considerable strategic gains. One of these gains would be the expansion of scale and, consequently, geopolitical status, considering the need for dialogue with the great powers. In this sense, for Vidigal (1990, pp. 64-65, our translation),

The current rapprochement between Argentina and Brazil could serve as the initial nucleus around which the countries of the Southern Cone should gradually gather, then those of the South American subcontinent, and so on, until *latu sensu* integration of Latin America is achieved. [...] unity in the fields of foreign policy and economics will give it strength and weight in the international arena.

In his view, the very capacity for unity among the countries of the region would constitute, *per se*, a factor of regional deterrence. Integration would be seen as a kind of geopolitical asset:

[...] it strengthens the deterrent capacity of each and of the whole; Above all, however, it is the demonstration of the political will to overcome all resistance to integration and the competence to implement it that constitute the factors that dissuade any attempt at armed intervention, especially given the political costs that, under these circumstances, it would entail (Vidigal, 1996, p. 114, our translation).

Also worth mentioning is the idea presented in the early 1990s by General Gleuber Vieira, then the 2<sup>nd</sup> Deputy Chief of the Army General Staff, regarding the proposal to create a sub-regional security organization in the Southern Cone through a rapprochement between Brazil and Argentina<sup>1</sup>. It is essential to emphasize that, despite advocating for increased military cooperation in the region, particularly through bilateral agreements, the official stance of the Brazilian military on this matter has consistently been characterized by prudence and caution. The general perception has long been that, due to regional instability and persistent mutual distrust among countries in the region, the conditions for military integration in South America were not ripe (Medeiros Filho, 2013).

Beginning in the 1980s, especially after the Itaipu-Corpus dispute between Brazil and Argentina was resolved, the conditions were in place for the establishment of trust-building mechanisms that paved the way for defense cooperation among South American countries (Winand, 2010). However, despite these conditions, institutional initiatives for regional defense cooperation only began to gain momentum in the late 1990s, with the creation of the Ministry of Defense (Medeiros Filho, 2010). In 1999, then-Defense Minister Geraldo Quintão championed the idea of a South American regional strategy, promoting not the formation of military alliances in the classic sense, but rather the strengthening of dialogue at the level of defense policy design (Martins Filho, 2006). The most significant impetus would come at the beginning of the first Lula administration (2003-2006). We can highlight four main areas that leveraged this idea (Medeiros Filho, 2010): i) Foreign policy – inclusion of security issues in the regional integration agenda, under the management of Minister Celso Amorim (2004); ii) Strategic studies – inclusion of the “collective regional defense system” event in a prospective document prepared by the Strategic Affairs Center of the Presidency of the Republic (2004); iii) Defense industry – search for greater interaction between the military equipment industries of South American countries, under the management of Minister José Viegas (2004); iv) Presidential diplomacy: proposal to create the South American Defense Council (CDS) of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), presented in Brasília by President Lula to Presidents Hugo Chávez (Venezuela) and Néstor Kirchner (Argentina) in 2006.

Throughout the Lula administrations (2003-2010), ideas related to regional cooperation and integration gained traction on the regional political agenda. In 2008, then-Defense Minister Nelson Jobim toured every country in South America on a mission he himself called “military diplomacy.” He sought to communicate Brazil’s objectives regarding the initiative to his counterparts: creating a regional defense cooperation mechanism (personnel exchange and military training, joint military exercises, joint participation in United Nations [UN] peacekeeping missions, etc.), integrating defense industrial bases, and creating a forum to examine situations of tension or conflict between countries in the region (Medeiros Filho, 2013). In Jobim’s (2010) opinion, regional integration was essential for the stability and prosperity of South American countries, to

1 This is the first time that an active-duty Brazilian Army member has publicly advocated for the creation of a sub-regional security organization (Medeiros Filho, 2010). It occurred during the seminar “Hacia las Fuerzas Armadas del año 2000,” held in Buenos Aires in August 1993. On that occasion, General Gleuber Vieira gave a lecture entitled “La variable estratégica en el proceso de constitución del MERCOSUR,” in which he argued that “un sistema colectivo de seguridad” could be conceived based on “un núcleo militar que se asocie a un centro de prevención de conflictos que podrá establecerse en el futuro en conformidad a la voluntad política de los países interesados” (Vieira, 1994, p. 18-19).

the extent that a Brazilian projection strategy could not be devised without considering a South American project.

## 2 ORIGIN AND ADOPTION OF THE EXTRAREGIONAL DETERRENCE STRATEGY

The idea of extraregional deterrence gained traction from prospective studies conducted by the Army's Strategic Studies Center (CEEEx) in the second half of the 2000s. During the development of the *EB Prospective Scenarios – 2030* (Brasil, 2010), the hypothesis was raised that future events would lead to the full political integration of South America. According to studies, under such conditions, the classic deterrence model, traditionally conceived based on bilateral relations between neighbors, could gradually give way to extraregional deterrence (Nascimento, 2008). Under such conditions, the idea of deterrence within the region would lose its meaning, being replaced by cooperation initiatives, since the threat of war between the fully integrated countries of the region would be overcome. On the other hand, the threatening sense would fall exclusively on extraregional powers, which would come to be seen as potential enemies.

In a context marked by the struggle for regional leadership among different agendas, the concept seemed to fit perfectly with Brazil's agenda<sup>2</sup>. The leading proponent of the extraregional deterrence strategy was then-Defense Minister Nelson Jobim. He believed that, considering South America's potential natural resources, it was necessary to develop a deterrent strategy for countries outside the region. On the other hand, regarding the countries in the region, the Brazilian strategy would not be deterrent, but cooperative, instead<sup>3</sup>.

On September 29, 2010, during a launch ceremony for the book "*International Security: Brazilian Perspectives*," Jobim advocated for a new level of defense for Brazil and its neighbors: the adoption of a subcontinental deterrence strategy.

In this sense, such a shift would radically alter the way Brazil had historically conceived its strategic deterrence, shifting it to a new territorial scale. While previously the focus was on its neighbors (on a regional scale), it now shifts to actors outside the region (on an extraregional scale).

Among its South American neighbors, the proposal for extraregional deterrence was officially presented during the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ordinary Meeting of the CDS, held in Lima, Peru, on May 12, 2011. Jobim highlighted the region's natural resource potential, the context of global scarcity, the risk of international greed, and the need for a common deterrence strategy. Discarding a collective defense model modeled after the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Jobim advocated

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2 Medeiros Filho (2009) identified three agendas in that context: Bolivarian, MERCOSUR, and Brazilian. For the author, the Bolivarian agenda corresponded to then-President Hugo Chávez's initiatives to implement "21<sup>st</sup>-Century Socialism," which was characterized by a blend of socialist, populist, nationalist, and, above all, anti-American tendencies. The MERCOSUR agenda referred to the idea, from a liberal perspective, of building a South American organization to boost intraregional trade and maintain democratic regimes. The Brazilian agenda was related to a supposed Brazilian geopolitical project for the subcontinent. Brazilian efforts to lead the process of regional integration in the fields of defense and security were part of this project.

3 Opening lecture of the VII Fort Copacabana Conference, held on November 3, 2010, in Rio de Janeiro.

for the construction of a South American security and defense identity based on cooperation (Medeiros Filho, 2023).

In August 2011, Nelson Jobim was replaced as Minister of Defense by Celso Amorim, who adopted his predecessor's vision of South America, even establishing a direct link between the idea of "extraregional deterrence" and the concept of a "security community"<sup>4</sup> for the region. According to him:

What we desire—and strive for—is the establishment of a South American community, capable of definitively eliminating armed conflict between the countries of the region. This cooperative strategy aims to foster intense political relations between the countries of South America, which themselves serve as an element of extraregional deterrence (Amorim, 2011, our translation).

Amorim again clarifies this idea of South America as a security community, endowed with shared deterrence, when speaking to Chilean military personnel during the inaugural lecture at the Chilean Military Academy on March 23, 2012:

I am convinced that South America is moving toward becoming a security community, in the sense that political scientist Karl Deutsch gave to this expression: a community of sovereign states among which war is unthinkable as a method of dispute resolution. As for deterrence, we want to develop it in a shared manner with South America (Amorim, 2012, our translation).

The idea of a regional defense strategy was not limited to Brazilian discourses; the CDS primarily adopted it. In this regard, it is worth recalling the speech of the first president of the CDS, Javier Ponce (then Minister of Defense of Ecuador), during the 1<sup>st</sup> South American Meeting of Strategic Studies, held at the Superior War School in Rio de Janeiro in November 2009. For him, without disregarding the importance of threats such as drug trafficking, the primary defense concern in the region was related to "safeguarding its natural resources" (Medeiros Filho, 2017).

With the creation of the CDS Center for Strategic Defense Studies (CEED/CDS) in 2011, a debate began on the foundations of South American strategic thinking in matters of defense and international security. According to Alfredo W. Forti (first director of the CEED), natural resources were considered the central factor of what came to be called "South American

<sup>4</sup> The concept of a "security community" was initially developed in the 1950s by Karl Deutsch and recently adopted by the constructivist perspective on international relations. According to this idea, a security community is established when a given supranational region gains control over conflicts within its borders. For Deutsch, "a security community is an entity with real assurance that members of the community will not fight other" (Deutsch, 1966, p. 25). The author distinguishes two types of communities: a pluralistic security community and an amalgamated political community. "If the main goal of integration is not only the preservation of peace among the integrated political units, but also the acquisition of greater power for general specific purposes, or the acquisition of a common role identity, or some combination of all these, then a so-called amalgamated political community with a common government is likely to be preferred. If the main aim is peace, then a pluralistic security community may suffice, and in fact may be easier to attain" (Deutsch, 1982, p. 269).

regional interests”<sup>5</sup>. Thus, for Forti, the adoption of a concept of “regional interest” suggested, from a defense perspective, the adoption of a strategic level beyond the national and, consequently, a South American defense identity. For him, “Nothing better illustrates the concept of ‘regional interest’ than strategic natural resources shared by the countries of the region and which constitute ‘common assets of the twelve UNASUR countries’”<sup>6</sup>.

For Forti, such considerations pointed toward a regional defense system that, in his opinion, was already underway. The regional cooperation model he<sup>7</sup> presented strongly adhered to the extraregional deterrence strategy advocated by Jobim:

The South American Defense Council has worked tirelessly toward a future regional cooperative scheme based on a dual category: ‘internal’ cooperation and ‘external’ deterrence<sup>8</sup> (our translation).

Regarding the “hacia fuera” dimension, Forti<sup>9</sup> states that this

implies that our regional defense and military capabilities must be concentrated and merged into one when it comes to protecting the regional interest of protecting its natural resources against potential actions by third states<sup>10</sup> (our translation).

### 3 THE RISE AND FALL OF REGIONAL COOPERATION: FROM THE SEARCH FOR INTEGRATION TO FRAGMENTATION

The end of the first decade of this century witnessed exponential growth in the debate on military cooperation—and integration—in South America. Even in the face of regional vulnerabilities that impeded it—national instability and a buildup of mutual distrust—the fact is that the discourse of authorities and the creation of new institutions, such as the CDS and its Center for Strategic Studies, ultimately led the discussion to higher levels of cooperation, even pointing to elements of regional integration. The idea of extraregional deterrence “fitted like a glove” in this regard.

<sup>5</sup> Excerpt from the lecture entitled “El papel de la Defensa en una estrategia suramericana para el aprovechamiento de los recursos naturales,” given by Alfredo W. Forti during the conference “Visiones hacia una Estrategia Suramericana para el Aprovechamiento de los Recursos Naturales,” held in Caracas, Venezuela, between May 27<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

<sup>6</sup> Idem.

<sup>7</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>8</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>9</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>10</sup> Ibidem.

It is essential to clarify that, although the Brazilian concept of “extraregional deterrence” implies a form of “defense of the South American continent,” Brazil had no interest in advancing models of collective defense, which would have been hardly feasible given the prevailing regional instability.

Despite treating South America as a “security community,” Minister Celso Amorim, for example, clearly opposed the idea of a single regional defense model, considering Brazil’s traditional opposition to “one size fits all” schemes (Amorim, 2011). Unlike the *collective defense* model<sup>11</sup>, Amorim advocated for a *cooperative security* model. Thus, for him, the desirable model would be:

[...] the establishment of a South American security community, capable of definitively eliminating armed conflict between the countries of the region. This cooperative strategy aims to foster intense political relations between the countries of South America, which themselves serve as an element of extraregional deterrence (Amorim, 2011, our translation).

It is clear here that the sense of “deterrence” advocated by the Defense Minister would not be related to a set of resources (military capabilities) that would support it, but to the social capital arising from the pattern of friendship and cooperation between countries in the region.

Since the transition from the Lula administration to the Dilma Rousseff administration in 2011, however, the process of regional integration, especially in terms of defense, has ceased to be a priority. Both internal and external factors contributed to this. Domestically, Dilma Rousseff did not demonstrate the same interest in foreign policy and presidential diplomacy as her predecessors. Externally, the effects of the international economic crisis, which were more pronounced in Brazil, should be highlighted. Thus, “Dilma Rousseff’s administration was characterized by a lower profile of external activity and a limited Brazilian contribution to the CDS, triggering a weakening of Brazilian foreign policy toward South America” (Bressan; Oliva, 2021, p. 90, our translation)

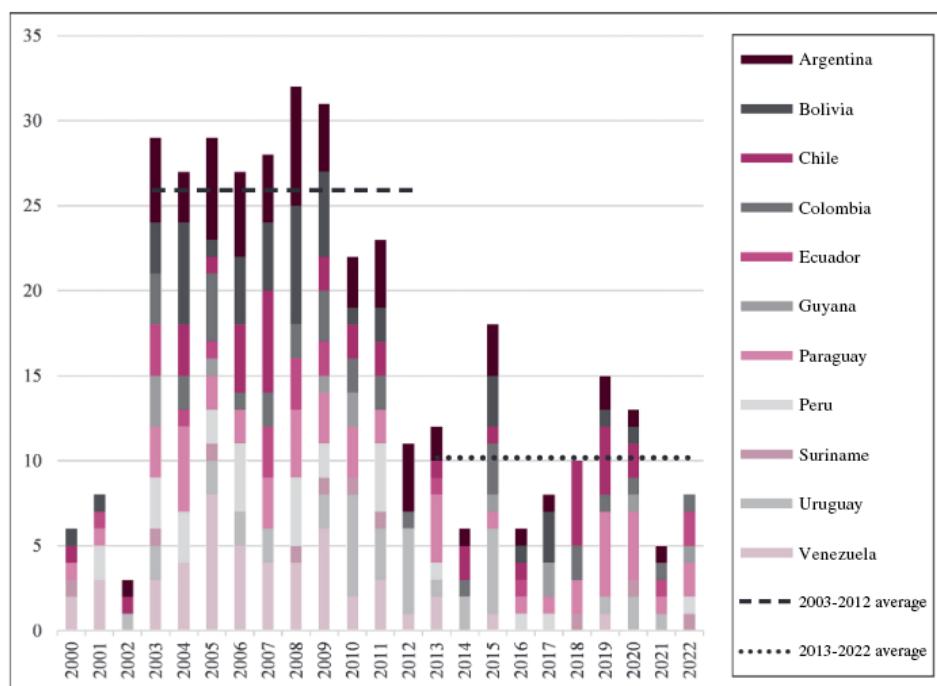
Starting with Michel Temer’s administration in 2016, the dissolution of Brazilian leadership in the region became clearer. Adopting a more pragmatic stance, the Brazilian government has since explicitly distanced itself from ideologically unaligned countries (Bressan, Oliva, 2021). The situation becomes even more serious under Jair Bolsonaro’s administration, due to a foreign policy explicitly aligned with the United States and other countries in the Northern Hemisphere, “neglecting the efforts made by previous Brazilian governments toward South American integration” (Salomão, 2023, p. 19, our translation), and resulting in the denunciation of the UNASUR Constitutive Treaty on April 15, 2019<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> It is possible to establish a relationship between models of regional cooperation and integration in the military field and the types of security communities suggested by Karl Deutsch (1982). While the “pluralistic security community” suggests a construct of cooperative security, aimed at maintaining peace and stability among the countries of the region through the development of mechanisms of mutual trust (notification of military maneuvers, exchange of information on defense spending, exchanges between military training establishments, etc.), the amalgamated security community suggests the idea of collective defense, based on the formation of a political community with a common functional identity and generation of power, whose main objective would be self-defense against a common enemy. This latter model of political community suggests a greater degree of integration, with elements of supranationality and a clear notion of a common threat.

<sup>12</sup> In addition to announcing the treaty’s termination, the note published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs states that “On March 22,

The fact is that the last two decades have seen what we might call the “rise and fall” of regional integration. This is reflected not only in discourses and arrangements at the regional level, but also in bilateral relations. In the particular case of Brazilian leadership, when analyzing the bilateral meetings between the presidents of Brazil and South American countries during this period, this trend is clearly observed, peaking in 2008—the year of the creation of UNASUR and the CDS—and declining especially from 2012 onwards. The average number of bilateral meetings, for example, between 2003 and 2012 was over 25; in contrast, from 2013 to 2022, this average dropped to 10 meetings (Figure 1).

**Figure 1 – Bilateral presidential meetings between Brazil and South American countries (2000-2022)**



**Source:** Barros (2023, p. 128).

Given the scenario of regional arrangements’ dehydration and regional instability, we suggest asking: What meaning does the concept of “extraregional deterrence” still hold for Brazil’s national defense? We will seek to answer this question in the final section of this article.

#### 4 DOES THE IDEA REMAIN VALID? CURRENT PERSPECTIVES

If the idea of extraregional deterrence was conceived in a scenario marked by the region’s capacity (under Brazilian leadership) to deter exogenous pressures and interests from a united

Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Paraguay, and Peru signed a document indicating their willingness to establish the Forum for the Progress of South America (PROSUR), replacing UNASUR. The new forum will feature a streamlined and flexible structure, accompanied by clear operating rules and an agile decision-making mechanism. It will also have the full validity of democracy and respect for human rights as essential requirements for its members” (Denúncia ..., 2019, our translation).

continent, the situation that has emerged in the last decade is precisely the opposite: on the one hand, we have observed the almost complete dissolution of cooperative regional defense and security arrangements; on the other, we have seen the increasing presence of extraregional powers in South America, definitively incorporating the subcontinent into the global geopolitical landscape.

What emerges as novel is that, unlike other contexts, the region no longer sees the presence of a single hegemonic power, but instead competing penetrations that, in an almost unprecedented way, reconfigure the environment of relative exclusivity that existed until then. A more accurate observation of the current situation suggests a dissimilarity with the Cold War period, when the actions of the then-hegemonic powers were indirect, seeking to dispense with the presence and use of military instruments on the subcontinent. Currently, in addition to the military presence of the United States and Russia—albeit in very different forms and dimensions—there is a context marked by the cautious rapprochement of China, as well as speculation about a possible US armed intervention in Venezuela. This context demonstrates that South America has indeed been integrated into the global geopolitical landscape (Medeiros Filho, Carvalho & Vaz, 2021, p. 83, our translation).

Therefore, the current situation presents enormous challenges to Brazilian leadership in the region and its proposal for extraregional deterrence. From a domestic perspective, regional fragmentation and the political and ideological instability of the region's countries virtually nullify the conditions for progress in regional defense and security arrangements. In 2019, when Brazil denounced the UNASUR treaty, a promise was made to establish a new regional arrangement, initially referred to as the Forum for the Progress and Integration of South America (PROSUR). However, this idea has not materialized amid a context of ideological shifts in leadership in countries considered essential to this idea, such as Argentina, Chile, and Colombia<sup>13</sup>.

Paradoxically, this regional fragmentation occurs in a context of growing demand for security and a redefinition of strategic alignments. From a geopolitical perspective, recent years have been marked in international politics by the intensification of strategic competition between the United States—in conjunction with NATO—and (re)emerging countries such as China and Russia (Milania, 2023). Although not considered a geopolitically priority region, there are signs that South America has emerged as a platform for strategic competition between the great powers.

In this context, in recent years, the first signs of a demand for the region to take a stand on ongoing disputes have emerged, such as the conflict in Ukraine and disputes involving technologies like 5G internet options. Thus, for Brazil, the intensification of rivalries between the great powers—notably the United States and China—makes it more challenging to diversify partnerships. “This occurs because positions of equidistance or neutrality tend to be viewed with

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<sup>13</sup> Notably, the PROSUR concept had a strong right-wing ideological component, in contrast to the perception of those governments that viewed UNASUR as a left-wing organization. Beginning in 2019, three key countries for this initiative, in addition to Brazil (Argentina, Chile, and Colombia), would change their governments: Alberto Fernández in Argentina (2019); Gabriel Boric in Chile (2021); and Gustavo Petro in Colombia (2022).

greater suspicion, especially by traditional powers that demand signs of alignment" (Milania, 2023, p. 20, our translation).

Considering the sense of extraregional deterrence from a Brazilian perspective, the country's most significant geopolitical challenge will be reconciling its desire for strategic autonomy and regional leadership with the need for equidistance between its two main trading partners: China and the United States. Considering either of these partners as an adversary—or worse, an enemy—would be a strategic disaster for the country. It has no interest in getting involved in a "war" that is not its own.

Maintaining this equidistance, however, will not be easy. Brazil is likely to face increasing pressure from both sides regarding its strategic options. Regarding pressure from the West, there seem to be clear signs in this direction. Recently, two North American initiatives have suggested reviving the collective defense of the "Western Hemisphere" (the American continent). The first concerns the Atlantic Basin Initiative, incorporating the South Atlantic into NATO's strategic scope. The second refers to the adoption of the concept of "integrated deterrence" within the American countries through regional cooperation in defense and security, a proposal officially presented during the XV Conference of Defense Ministers of the Americas, held in Brasília in July 2022. Brazil appears to be resisting such proposals (Medeiros Filho, 2024).

The current South American geopolitical context points in a very different direction from that envisioned when the idea of "extraregional deterrence" for the continent was first conceived. The worst geopolitical scenario for Brazil's regional leadership appears to be unfolding: internal fragmentation and external pressure. In the northwest corner of the continent, Venezuela, aligned with Russia, China, and Iran, poses a threat to Guyana's territorial integrity, bringing to our neighborhood the resurgence of territorial conflicts that have lain dormant for decades (Milania, 2023). In the Southern Cone, Argentina is attempting to align itself automatically with the United States, adopting an explicitly anti-China stance. At the center of this scenario lies Brazil and its desire to maintain strategic autonomy and regional leadership.

## 5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this article, we explored the concept of "extraregional deterrence" and its current interpretation. Conceived in the second half of the 2000s, the Brazilian strategy suggested a new paradigm of deterrence for South American countries within the concept of a regional security community. In this model, deterrence would no longer refer to neighbors and would take on a new scale—the extraregional—with exogenous interests arising from global powers as its referents. The ideas of political community, regional stability, and shared interests were necessary components of the ideal model envisioned.

More than 15 years after its formulation, however, the idea proves to be largely unfeasible. This does not mean that, from the perspective of the regional leadership project, it makes no sense. Quite the contrary: regional stability will always be a priority for Brazil's strategic interests. The regional defense cooperation model proved adequate, with the Brazilian government advocating for more modest and realistic options for advancing cooperation and dialogue, avoiding the

idea of “collective defense” or the formation of a regional alliance, which, in addition to being risky, would be unrealistic.

However, the current context appears unfavorable. The region appears fragmented, while external interference seems to be increasing in prevalence. If the international situation moves toward a hegemonic dispute involving Brazil’s two main trading partners, the situation could worsen, especially if these powers exploit the vulnerabilities of the countries in the region and latent territorial conflicts as elements of their strategic competition.

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