

THE BRAZIL OF LULA: A GLOBAL AND AFFIRMATIVE DIPLOMACY (2003-2010)

Paulo Fagundes Visentini¹

Brazil is the fifth country in the world in terms of population and territorial surface and became the tenth economy during the Military Regime (1964-1985), after declining during the opening of the neoliberal globalization and the ending of the Cold War. During the government of Luis Inácio “Lula” da Silva (2003-2010), however, Brazil won remarkable importance worldwide in politics and economy, reaching the eighth position. Brazilian diplomacy reached a global position and the economy become dynamic and established bonds in all continents. How this was possible?

The bases of Lula’s government and its Foreign Policy

The crushed victory of a center-left candidate to the presidency, Luiz Inácio “Lula” da Silva, happened in a peaceful way, on the contrary of the catastrophic speculations and showing the existence of certain continuity lines. The new government, the first headed by a working class person in 500 years, was supported by an extensive support board, including the syndical bases of the Worker’s Party, segments of the middle class punished by the economic model, sectors of the Army Forces, the State and nationalist politicians, besides businessman interested in a strong home market. This base encouraged the adoption of measures capable of reducing the huge social deficit, caused by the neo-liberal era, by creating jobs, reducing the level of crime and violence and reinforcing the mass manufacturing economy.

Many expected an international behavior based on ideological vision and an unprepared president. But what has been seen was a diplomacy gifted of tactical-strategic sense, of long range vision and a president with charismatic worldwide. As we saw, although the actual course of Brazilian foreign policy began in the second

¹ PhD. Coordinator of the International Strategic Studies Doctoral Program and International Relations professor at Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, (UFRGS), Brazil. (paulovi@ufrgs.br)

government of Fernando Henrique Cardoso, there weren't significant changes at that moment. The ex-president didn't have the will and also the political base to make a change that could overcome a shy critical speech and a limited inflection. Lula's inauguration changed this situation and Brazilian foreign policy became developed and protagonist, overcoming expectations.

The ambassador Celso Amorim returns to lead the Ministry of External Relations and, meaningfully, the ambassador Samuel Guimarães became General Secretary, caring an essential role, always induced by foreign interests, elements of previews management and press sectors connected to both. To fulfill the new strategy, the international relations on Lula's government had three dimensions: an economic diplomacy, another political and a social program. The first dimension is realistic, the second is resistance and affirmation and the third is propositional. It has been a mature project for over a decade, and not some proactive policy, because it demonstrates the correlation of forces in Brazil and worldwide.

In relation to the first aspect, is necessary to keep open the trading channels with First World Countries, getting resources (investment and technology), negotiating the external debt and identifying that the government intends to keep the international commitments without any sharp break or change of macroeconomic model. However, this "caudatary" dimension of the world order is compensated by the strength of the negotiation position together with the multilateral financial institutions and some internal adjustments to reinforce the operational capacity of the State and the home market.

The political diplomacy, on the other hand, represents a reaffirmation field of national interests and a real leading role on international relations, with real intention of developing an active and affirmative diplomacy, ending a phase of stagnation and emptiness. Lula's government gave back to Itamaraty the strategic position that it previously occupied in formulation and execution of Brazil's external policy. Besides, Itamaraty had a wide rerouting with: adoption of non quotas affirmative policies, extension of the number of diplomats, opening of new embassies in Africa and Asia and more openness of the diplomacy to civil society and the academy.

Finally, the internal project of Lula's government also has a significant international impact as its social proposals relate to the agenda that tries to correct the distortions created by a focused globalization only on trade and free investments. The campaign for combating starvation represents the symbolic

element which signals the construction of an alternative socio-economic model, responding to the neo-liberal globalization crisis.

Measures such as revalorization of the home market and the capacity of internal savings, the mass manufacturing economy and the combat of internal factors that undermine a more qualified international action (such as social inequality, unemployment, crime, administrative disorder and fiscal chaos) are evidences of the construction of this project. Social, energetic, urban, land and productive policies represent a political will of this kind. Parallel to this, the president's charisma seen to be summarized in his franc and simple figure the characteristics that the world admires in Brazil. It allowed Lula to develop an intense international agenda as spokesman of this project.

Brazil acts with optimism and political will, creating constantly facts in international area. Previously the country demonstrated a low self-esteem, because the governs of Collor and Cardoso saw Brazil as a belated country in relation to the rich nations. Now, on the contrary, Brazil considers itself protagonist of equivalent level, with bargaining power and owner of a project that can also contribute to insert the social agenda in globalization. Instead of empty speeches and practice obedience, the country has proposed measures and ensuring the ones that are right at your fingertip. Yes, because there was a room for manoeuvre, still limited that could but wasn't used in 1990. The emphasis on FHC's era was reversed, which implies a significant inflection in terms of foreign policy.

In practical terms, Brazilian government supplanted the passivity of the previous one and searched for alliances outside the hemisphere, as a way of amplify its power of influence in international scope from the active and programmatic stance. The highest priority of the agenda consists on the reconstruction of Mercosur and the South American integration, building a space for a shared Brazilian leadership. Besides, solidarity with Africa is also central, because it associates ethics principles and national interest. The intention of deepen the relation (and establish a strategic partnership) with emerging powers such as China, India, Russia and South Africa, among others, beside the establishment of a strategic association with European Union and the appreciation of the international institutions (especially the UN), besides the economic advantages, show the intention of contribute to the establishment of an multipolar international system. The international relation principle of democratization is explicitly invoked.

All these initiatives point to the attempt the creating a balance in relation to all that remains been, because of globalization, the main dimension of international insertion: relation with the great powers (especially the USA) and as international

capital. It began the construction of a bigger space to bargain and a global alternative, with Brazil giving a contribution in proportional with its international weight. In practice, it meant that Itamaraty, instead of concentrating on the attempt of cooperation with countries more developed than Brazil with big but saturated markets, searched spaces that weren't occupied, developing high profile diplomacy. With these credentials, Brazilian president opened the United Nations General Assembly in New York, event with record in participation of leaders in 2003.

Mercosur, IIRSA and UNASUR: the South American integration

One of the first actions was in Venezuela, when Brazil sent help to the next door country that was dealing with an overall strike of almost two months sustain by the opposition against the govern of Hugo Chávez. Besides, Brazil also proposed the creation of The Friends of Venezuela Group, in support of the OEA mediation (included Brazil, USA, Chile, Mexico, Portugal and Spain). The Brazilian proposal has generated critiques by the opposition of that country and certain unease by USA. Washington was surprised by Brazilian diplomacy agility and tried to assume the initiative as a way of minimize the emergent South American leadership. Over time, relations between Brazil and the Bush govern became extremely cooperatives (to Brazilian opposition's dismay), especially with the advent of a new left government in South America.

It's necessary to emphasizes that Brazil has strong and friendly relations with Venezuela, no matter which government is in power in both countries. Deals about the boundary control, economic complementation and integration of transport and energy networks were established between Caracas and Brasília already in 1994, during Itamar Franco and Rafael Caldera govern (Protocol La Guzmanía). By this mean, the Brazilian help didn't represent any kind of "left solidarity" or intrusion in the internal affairs of another country, as the Venezuelan opposition argued. For Brazil, didn't matter the political or economical chaos in its boundaries (already happens in relation to the conflict in Colombia), with a collapse of the Venezuelan economy or a civil war, that might happen. Much less the break in the constitutional rules and the deposition of an elected, which has already been avoid successfully in more than one opportunity by Mercosur in relation to Paraguay.

Analyzing the South American integration and also the Mercosur one as main priority, it's offered to neighbors a needed partnership to recover economy growth, a

sine qua non condition to turn interaction more than just virtual and to open a possibility for a strategic action in global plan that reverses the raising marginalisation in the area. Just the regional integration can ensure governability and progress to all South America and also be an essential instrument in FTAA (Free Trade Area of the Americas) negotiations.

This new reality allowed reinforce the policy introduced by the South American countries to develop physic infrastructure (transport, communication and energy), as a form of restarting the integration progress. Lula's Brazil, by his turn, gives strategic importance to the initiative, deepening qualitatively the policy used by FHC in his last govern. Hence, Brazilian Development Bank already began the funding of works to physical South American integration and the chairperson Marco Aurélio Garcia reveled that govern intended duplicate the resources to the program, such as seeking support to the Inter-American Development Bank and others financiers institutions.

President Kirchner, in his turn revealed the Argentinean will of changing the economic policy that the country developed in 1990, leaving neoliberalism and searching a model based on public investments and combating poverty. In international plan, he revealed the intention of closer cooperation with Brazil, redeem Mercosur and contribute actively to South American integration. It's interesting that the new argentine government evolved from Menem's carnal relation with the U.S. to an equidistant attitude, giving motives to make the White House think about the emergence of an autonomous pole Brazil-Argentina.

In this way, it's observed the return of South America in diplomatic leading role and the integration process, with a parallel affirmation of internal agendas of economic and social development. The current South American diplomatic performance not only refers to the regional plan, but a performance focuses worldwide. In short, Peru's association to Mercosur, the campaign for support the Andean countries in association to the Andean Community of Nations to Mercosur and the material advance of measures towards integration of South American countries' physical infrastructure have generated a new spirit in the area. New governs assumed the power with international positions similar to the Brazilian diplomacy, others changed their agendas, converging with Itamaraty's agenda. Even Colombia, with the Brazilian proposal of mediate the release of hostages held by FARC, starts looking at Brazil with different eyes, and only Chile persecutes acts away from his neighbors.

South American integration involves three levels: Mercosur, IIRSA and CASA/UNASUL. Mercosur represents the commercial and investment level, already

directed. Despite the critical of some leaders, usually aimed at the internal public, the bloc has made progress in areas such as education, politics and scientific-technological. Were established Regional Productive Chains and The Program for the Competitive Substitution of Imports, whose objective is promote exports of the others members of Mercosur to Brazil, as to balance trade. Besides, all countries of CAN and Chile are already associated members of Mercosur, despite some of them signed free trade agreements with the U.S.

IIRSA, Initiative for the Integration of the Regional Infrastructure of South America represents a functional way of integration, focused on infrastructure of transports, communication and energy. It matters all countries and some external actors such as China, European Union, Japan and even The United States. It allows create employment and overcome the Fiscal Responsibility Law (having not budget international funds), which limits the political of internal development of each State. IIRSA develops several projects, besides the construction of oil platforms and pipelines, overcoming exploration of ideological dimension.

Finally, the South American Community of Nations (CASA in Portuguese), created in December 2004 and further in April 2007 transforming in the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), which represents a forum to develop the political conscience of integration (including Guiana and Suriname). It developed, equally, a locus where a high level dialogue between member States occurred and lots of differences and outline are solved. It's particularly useless with the advent of left-wing in the area; if Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Chile represent highly institutionalized models, Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador are trying to format their political systems, which implies constant dialogue. We must admit that Brazilian diplomacy has been successful dealing with nationalization of Bolivian gas, Venezuelan crisis and the confront between Colombia and Ecuador in 2008, the last one in framework of OEA. Outside South America, the more relevant actions has been the cooperation with Cuba and the peacekeeping mission in Haiti.

Strategic partnership and South-South Cooperation: ideology or pragmatism?

At global level, Brazil has been trying to act like a member of BRICs (the giants Brazil, Russia, India, China and after South Africa, classified by Goldman-Sachs consultancy), providing content to the strategic partnership and promoting South-South Cooperation. Accused by the opposition of ideological initiative based on the experience of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries in 1970, the actions are

focus in common points, without the creation of an anti-hegemonic or anti-OCDE front.

The first step was the constitution of IBAS² or G-3, The India-Brazil-South Africa Trilateral Cooperation Forum, a South African initiative, not supported by FHC. The Foreign Ministers Celso Amorim, Yashwant Sinhá and Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma announced that G-3 would seek to promote trilateral cooperation, mutual commercial liberalization and unification and strengthening of positions in multilateral fora. Negotiations will involve Mercosur, Southern African Customs Union and possibly, South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). The three countries expressed, equally, the desire of approaching Russia and China turning in G-5 (if that occurs, the Group would host almost half of the total world population and a considerable amount of total production, which may influence significantly the multilateral negotiations. Creation of G-3 was an important initiative, when the South countries need to act in order to protect their interests and to change important subjects of the current global agenda. It is a contribution for construction of a multipolar world system, without hegemonies and leaded by multilateral organizations.

Others initiatives were highlighted such as Lula's visits to the Arab countries and approximation with Africa, continent that the president visited eight times in six years of govern. As a result, regular Meetings of South America-Arab Countries were held and was signed the cooperation Mercosur-Gulf Cooperation Council deal (May 2005) and the Africa-South America Summit Reunions (ASA).

Lula's visit were important not only to Brazil-South Africa relations (11 visits, 29 countries, 17 new embassies), but, mainly, for the establishment of an institutionalized association between Mercosur and Southern Africa Customs Union (SACU), the integration area centered by South Africa on the southern part of the continent. In Africa, Brazil became a new important actor, on the side of China e India. Relations with the countries of Medium Orient were increased not only on trade, but equally in diplomatic terms, because Brazil was invited to mediate the crisis between Iran and Palestine.

It is about taking the existents gaps on the international system, deepened after the September 11 attacks taking over spaces that were extremely important to amplify the exports of goods and services expanding the action of Brazilian companies and international influence of the country. The active solidarity is also important, such as the projects in social and health area, besides the joint approach

² Disponível em: <<http://www.forumibsa.org>>. Acesso em maio 2009.

in international organisms, through coalitions of variable geometry like the Commercial G-20. President Lula achieved the feat of overcome FHC in number of external travels, although different geography and personal style. Lula came to be seen as a fresh new, speaking Portuguese, with his spontaneous style and campaigns against poverty that caused so many disapproval in our middle class, gave him an enormous prestige worldwide.

Relations with China finally reached the strategic partnership level and cooperation with Russia and, in bilateral level, with India and South Africa are developing in this direction. Not only on business and investment plan there is progress, but also in actions center on multilateral plan (despite some punctual divergences) and in joint science and high technology (aerospace, atomic energy, military) projects. The campaign for obtain a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, is based on these alliances, the up grade on Brazil's international position and the proposal of associate it to a reform that could give more power to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

A new focus to North-South relations

In political-diplomatic field, Lula's government began when was about to emerge the American invasion of Iraq. Brazil's position was strong, denying support any action without the UN inspectors finished their jobs and the Organization gave its green light. The attitude was extremely welcomed by the members of the Axis for Peace (France, Germany and Russia) pointing out the new autonomy of Itamaraty's diplomacy. The participation in World Social Forum in Porto Alegre and days after in World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland increased Lula's prestige, except by the left parties. Similarly, the condemnation of terrorism was accompanied by the rejection of the War on Terrorism agenda and time made sense to Brazilian attitude.

An additional example of the continuously mobilization power of Brazilian diplomacy was the structuring of G-20, where Brazil acted efficiently on the WTO meeting in Cancun. Cordial but contesting, Brazilian diplomacy establishing links with developing countries affected by protectionism and agricultural subsidies from the First World Countries. The G-22 surprised the rich countries and gave voice to the South American unhappiness, closing the ending of the spectacular meeting. There far, the tendency is that the South American constellation and some other powerful countries (not exactly a "bloc") will help to moderate the North American

attitude in international relations, helping simultaneously in construction of a multipolar world governed by the United Nations system.

Added, all these events had impact in the relations between Brazil and US and certainly, in FTAA's negotiation. Nowadays FTAA's negotiations are blocked, despite affirming that it was inevitable. Bush's manifestation that would not be willing to remove the gigantic agricultural subsidies for American agriculture and protectionism for products such as steel, as well unilateral measures designed to defend American economy, represent an answer not much likely to large multilateral agreements of commercial liberalization. Subsidies, non-tariff barriers, patents, government procurement and others items would be send to the WTO and Bush would have an abbreviation to show to the U.S. electorate. In FTAA's reunion in Port of Spain the USA made this position very clear. To Mercosur countries and Brazil in particularly, these matters were essentials in the same way that some matters of FTAA are not important, which makes it harder.

Equally, the process were hampered by others structural matters of North American hegemony, as the costs of their decisions referent to the War on Iraq and Afghanistan. With that, the White House aware of the growing difficulties on FTAA's negotiations, would have to count on Brazil's support, because without it, FTAA won't be implemented, since the U.S. has access to others countries' economies, which are in a smaller dimension compared to the Brazilian one. Ironically, putting negotiation in right foundations made sounds that the initiative of frozen FTAA came from the American, neutralizing possible reactions by the Brazilian opposition. Negotiations with FTAA are suspended.

Lula's govern started to negotiate strongly, looking for defending Brazilian economic interests. As global trader, the country intends to maintain their relation with several areas worldwide, focusing on Mercosur and South American integration. After reversing American expectations that the govern had left policies, Lula become admired in Washington. It's necessary to observe that Brazil's diplomacy went against some positions of the hegemonic power and emphasized your autonomy, create a reasonable room for manoeuvre. This way, called attention to all socio-economic and infrastructure works demands with neighbors.

Diplomacy presents itself as the most successful field on the current govern, with the country recovering of an action with great intensity and planetary reach, worthy of fifth more populous and extensive nation and tenth economy in the world. This leading paper with the Third World and the diversification of bonds with the First World give to the country a certain differential to intensive the campaign for obtain a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, as a permanent

member. Ironically, today Brazil has a better dialogue with Washington and a more respected diplomacy, with bargaining power. The economical crisis and the military-diplomatic damage in the U.S. on the ending of eight years of Bush govern constitutes interesting points to think about.

Balance and perspectives

New oil fields made Brazil became self-sufficient and projects such as ethanol and uranium enrichment points to advances, but the political front continuous to be fragile, with great polarization, including against foreign policy. The govern tries to keep a low profile and, many times does not react in a proper manner. The reason why foreign policy is the most used front in Lula's government is explained by the fact that it is directed by Itamaraty (and supported by part of it), which recovered its space and has the support of segments inside the State, worried about the national matter, such as the Brazilian Development Bank and the Army Forces.

The president was reelected, in second round, with 58 million of votes (61%) and the second mandate has, like was promised, giving a bigger attention to the project of development and the social plan. A new oil field made the country self-sufficient and projects with ethanol and uranium enrichment point to advances, but the political front continuous to be fragile, with big polarization, including against the foreign policy.

The field of science and technology is ecisive, and the countries that don't focus its development in aerospace sectors, nuclear, defense, informatics and biotechnology will be in sideshow. It's necessary promote social inclusion (creating a new paradigm, which turns work and techno-scientific revolution, environmental balance and democratic governability. But his task can't be held exclusively at home but global, including the social, environmental and democratic matters in globalization agenda, therefore it's necessary a foreign policy meeting the challenges.

During the last decade, Brazil catalogued its political and economic position worldwide, and this tendency was maintained even with the international financial crisis, which affects OCDE countries since 2008. In the same line, the quality of life for Brazilians continuous to improve significantly. That's why the candidate indicated by Lula to the presidency, Dilma Rousseff which govern began in January 2011 despite some style adjustment, she is keeping the main aspects of Lula's diplomacy. Brazil's participation on Financial G-20 and BRICs represent not only

some aspects to deal with the growing imbalance between the economic order (increasingly multipolar) and the military-political order (which remains dominated by the remainder superpower, the U.S.).

REFERENCES

- ALTEMANI, Henrique, e LESSA, Antônio Carlos (Orgs.). *Relações Internacionais do Brasil*. São Paulo: Saraiva, v. 2. 2006.
- BATISTA Jr, Paulo Nogueira. *O Brasil e a economia internacional. Recuperação e defesa da autonomia nacional*. Rio de Janeiro: Campus/Elsevier, 2005.
- CERVO, Amado. Relações Internacionais do Brasil. Um balanço da era Cardoso. *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional*. Número 45: 2002, p. 5-35.
- CEPIK, Marco (Org.). *América do Sul: economia e política da integração regional*. Porto Alegre: UFRGS, 2008.
- FARIA, Luiz Augusto Estrella. *A chave do tamanho: desenvolvimento econômico e perspectivas do Mercosul*. Porto Alegre: UFRGS, 2004.
- GUIMARÃES, Samuel Pinheiro. *Desafios do Brasil na era dos gigantes*. Rio de Janeiro: Contraponto, 2006.
- MINISTÉRIO das Relações Exteriores. *Repertório da Política Externa: posições do Brasil*. Brasília: FUNAG, 2007.
- _____. *Obras de integração física na América do Sul*. Brasília: MRE, 2007.
- SALLUM Jr, Brasílio. “A condição periférica: o Brasil nos quadros do capitalismo mundial (1945-1990)”. In MOTA, Carlos Guilherme (Org.). *Viagem incompleta: a experiência brasileira (1500-2000)*. São Paulo: SENAC, 2000.
- SENNES, Ricardo. *As mudanças da política externa brasileira nos anos 80: uma potência média recém industrializada*. Porto Alegre: Ed. da UFRGS, 2003.
- SILVA, Luiz Inácio Lula da, AMORIM, Celso, e GUIMARÃES, Samuel Pinheiro. *A política externa do Brasil*. Brasília: FUNAG, 2003.

VISENTINI, Paulo, and SILVA, André Reis. “Brazil and the Economic, Political and Environmental Multilateralism” in *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional*. Special Edition, Brasília, 2010.

VIZENTINI. Paulo. *Relações Internacionais do Brasil: de Vargas à Lula*. São Paulo: Editora Fundação Perseu Abramo, 2008.

_____. *A política externa do regime militar brasileiro*.

_____, & WIESEBRON, Marianne (Eds.). *Free trade for the Americas? FTAA and the US push for integration*. London/ New York: Zed Books, 2004.

Received on 10 February 2012.

Approved on 17 February 2012.

ABSTRACT

During Lula's government (2003-2010) Brazil experienced significant social and economical improves, but especially developed an “active and affirmative” diplomacy of global span, which assured autonomy and international prestige. Beneath Brazil’s coordination the South American integration had moved on. The country established strategic partnerships with China, Russia, India and South Africa, which, added to the advance of the south-south cooperation, changed the course of global multilateral negotiation. When it is about to choose the heiress, Lula’s diplomatic legacy must deepen, contributing to a worldwide reform.

KEYWORDS

Lula’s government; Brazilian foreign policy; Brazil’s diplomacy.