

## **FROM DEREGULATION TO DECENTERING IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF «Lusofonia»**

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### **Abstract**

The paper shall rest on the geopolitics of the evolving security situation in the southern reaches of the Atlantic, and what this means for Portuguese and Lusophone interests. It will focus, mainly, on the growing threats the region faces and the risks of a rapid degradation which could result from the simultaneous ever louder affirmation of both regional and extra-regional players (State and non-State ones) and the glaring absence of an overarching security architecture there. Brazil, Argentina, Venezuela, South Africa, Angola and Nigeria (to take a few obvious examples) have to contend with a growing US, Russian, and Chinese presence in the area, a presence with an ever-increasing clout economic, political, and military.

Geostrategically, the region is subdivided into four sub-regions, as concerns these enhanced tensions, each raising thorny issues of its own. Special attention is given to Brazilian, Cape Verdian and Angolan interests and responses to this, and on the role Portuguese foreign policy has been playing in the developing and emergent regional tensions, potential and actual. The role of multilateral organization and coalitions, and the various degrees of formality of objectives they display, is also touched upon, albeit only lightly. More than simply on hard economic, political, and military data, the analysis endeavours to take stock of the discursive dimension of threats and tensions in the four sub-regions identified in the South Atlantic.

### **Keywords**

South Atlantic; Lusofonia; security architecture; threat-perception and securitization; risk; geopolitics

### **How to cite this article**

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Immersed in relative darkness for millennia, the South Atlantic has more recently undergone fluctuations in its centrality<sup>1</sup>. Let us focus just on the last half of the millennium, given that it was only in this interval that the basin became more than just a local entity. The South Atlantic gained importance as a sea route with Vasco da Gama's discovery of the maritime route to India in the late fifteenth century – a feat, since “despite increasing the distance, it reduced the number of intermediaries and freight costs, enabling bringing the spice business to Portugal and taking it away from Venetian and Arab merchants”<sup>2</sup>. When Portugal and Spain were replaced by England and Holland as maritime powers, the importance of the South Atlantic did not diminish: even the tea and the cotton routes on clippers from Asia and Australasia, benefiting from the roaring forties, until the late nineteenth century went through Cape Horn and crossed the Atlantic on the way to Europe”<sup>3</sup>. Once it became recognized, from the sixteenth century onwards the overall political and economic importance of the South Atlantic grew gradually, despite constant advances and retreats; it was non-linear. After the demise of the Portuguese and Spanish golden ages, the southern basin of the large ocean lost some of its importance, as attested by the fact that, in his second exile following Waterloo, Napoleon was not sent to an Elba-type location, where he may have made a sudden comeback, but to Santa Helena, in the back of beyond. Referring to this progression is a useful exercise, as its rising importance only started to wane after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, and later, in 1914, of the Panama Canal – events which, understandably, led to a huge concentration of maritime trade in the Mediterranean and North Atlantic, respectively.

So, on the late eighteenth century, the former core position of the South Atlantic seemed to slow down. Still, the importance of the southern seas increased again in the mid-fifties of the twentieth century as a result of the nationalization of the Suez Canal in 1956 by Egypt's newly appointed President Gamal Abdel Nasser, with all the implications that stemmed from it, namely” the search for newer and safer oil transportation routes, which despite increasing the distance involved, reduced the cost

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<sup>1</sup> An Italian translation of a small portion of this article was published in a different format, for instance, without footnotes and referring only to facts of the time in 2010 in the journal *Limes*. “La lusofonia nella partita del Sud-Atlantico”, *Limes* 5-2010: 55-67, *Rivista Italiana di Geopolitica*, numero speciale, *Il Portogallo è grande Roma*. I must also mention a brief article I titled “A Nova Geopolítica do Atlântico Sul”, *Revista de Marinha*: 20-24, Lisbon, which refers to many ideas on Lusophony equally mentioned in the present article.

<sup>2</sup> The sentence is my own translation of one written by Angola's General João Baptista de Matos, stated in a work published on 2 February 2010, “A importância do Atlântico Sul”, available at <http://www.cepen.org/2010/02/a-importancia-do-atlantico-sul/>. João de Matos is the Director of the Centre for Strategic Studies (*Centro de Estudos Estratégicos*) in Luanda.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*



of the freight charged”<sup>4</sup>. As Eduardo Italo Pesce pointed out, “during the twentieth century, the South Atlantic remained the ‘most peaceful of the oceans’, despite a few isolated light actions in World Wars I and II, and the Axis’ submarine campaign during the Second World War.

The South Atlantic regained some importance in the era of the ‘super tankers’ during the 1970s due to the first oil crisis and the temporary interruption of vessel traffic in the Suez Canal. Between April and June 1982, it became the stage of armed conflict between Argentina and the United Kingdom over the possession of the Falklands. As is often pointed out, this only became possible due to the huge increase in capacity – and hence the size – of tankers. The solution was the creation of the *Very-Large Crude Carriers* (the famous VLCC), whose only drawback was not being able to use the Suez Canal and many ports in Europe and in the United States, which required offshore transshipment or offloading. The old Southern Route was thus back in the international economic arena and recovered the former importance it had enjoyed with the European Asian trade and with the intra-Atlantic “triangular trade” started in the Renaissance. And, it seemed, it had come to stay. The end of the bipolar world put the South Atlantic back in the limelight, this time for structural and deeper reasons.

It is certainly fascinating to examine this recovery of centrality that arrived in the last decade of the twentieth century and accelerated in the twenty first century – and see how the South Atlantic managed to emerge out of the penumbra where it had stood for such a long time, at first marked by conjunctural economic and political factors that gradually became “structural” ones. Indeed, this come back nowadays involves far more intricate issues, for once linked to the South Atlantic by the ocean itself, not just by its relative geographical, economic and political position. In fact, both its transnationalization and growing security centralization are easy to understand, in addition to the emergence of powerful coastal states on the back of this ever more central South Atlantic, and of better armed and progressively active movements whose importance on the international stage is increasingly noticeably. The implications are far from negligible and it is likely that the long geopolitical isolation of this ocean is nearing its end and that the region now once more has, so to speak, become overtly geopoliticised.

### **The South Atlantic as a *de facto* political entity**

In political, economic and military terms, I define the South Atlantic as the basin and coast lines that lie below the area of jurisdiction of the Atlantic Alliance, roughly ranging from the Cape Verde archipelago down to, and including, Antarctica<sup>5</sup>. It has many geographical specificities and, in this aspect and without wishing to pinpoint any single cause determinism, I quote Eduardo Italo Pesce again: “the rise in oil production in the

<sup>4</sup> In an article of the Italian-Brazilian Eduardo Italo Pesce published in *Monitor Mercantil* in 09/07/2010, page. 2. Pesce is a professor at the Production Centre of the University of the State of Rio de Janeiro and a permanent collaborator at the Centre for Political and Strategic Centre (*Centro de Estudos Político-Estratégicos*) of the Naval War College of Brazil and the Centre for Strategic Studies of Universidade Federal Fluminense.

<sup>5</sup> Other definitions are naturally possible, and may have been proposed, including by the Brazilian government, as we shall see, and by the U.S. Administration. For a definition of what constitutes the geopolitical “South Atlantic” that is similar to mine see the paper by Portuguese Admiral Nuno Vieira Matias (2010). “A geopolítica do Atlântico Sul”, *II Congresso Os Mares da Lusofonia*, which has not yet been published, Cascais.



reserves located in the coastal sedimentary basins of South America and West Africa may increase the strategic importance of the South Atlantic, contributing to reducing US and other western countries' dependence on Middle East oil".

Not including the potential of the Brazilian pre-salt, the daily production of crude at sea in South America can grow from 2.5 million barrels in 2005 to 6.1 million barrels by 2030 (144% growth). In the same period, production in the African coast may rise from 4.9 to 12.4 million barrels per day (up 153%). The increase in international trade, ever more dependent on maritime transport, has led to the structuring of a highly globalized and essentially transnational system of economic use of the seas. I shall examine this economic, political and military resizing and corresponding implications in this brief article.

Understandably, concerns with this rescaling have been growing, yet not major answers have been advanced for the very real problems that this matter has raised. In order to examine, albeit superficially and without making any in-depth analytical considerations of what I consider a rapid degradation of the international political situation in that region, I will now focus on three topics – or, better, two topics and a half. I shall refer to the variety of challenges that have changed the way the players involved perceived, both internally and externally, security in the South Atlantic. I will do little more than list some of these challenges: the new emerging statute of the South Atlantic, largely conceived as a natural extension (at least potentially) of the North Atlantic. I shall address the increasing importance of the strategic resources located there; the "race to the South Atlantic", as the great powers from the 'outside' go there to stay (I will mention the examples of the U.S., China, Russia, the UK, and Germany) and as regional powers of growing importance (Brazil, Angola, South Africa and perhaps also Venezuela and Cuba) are emerging; the intensified and increasingly robust and harsh competition among these internal and external "great powers" and the forms of cooperation among them – and all the material limits of all this.

Finally, I shall examine the slow but not less important long overdue construction of a significant, tangible regional security architecture, which has been very conspicuous by its absence in these southern seas. I will also underline the opportunities brought about by this recentralization for Portugal and Portuguese-speaking countries in what, alongside the Pacific and the Mediterranean basins, is becoming a new *Mare Nostrum* in terms of opportunities, tensions, challenges, and risks. Although I will not go into details, I believe there are at least four security sub-regions in my definition of the South Atlantic, with different properties and characteristics. Two of them are horizontal strips that link the west and the east of the basin (one in the north, from the Caribbean to the African bulge, roughly between the area under NATO jurisdiction and that of Brazil's; the other stands in the South, below the Falklands parallel and extends to the Antarctic); the other two sub-regions run vertically connecting the north and the south of the South Atlantic basin, one on the west side along and off the South American coast, and the other on the east along and off the African coast<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Obviously these sub-regions interact and complement each other; however, they have different features (albeit to a lesser degree) that separate them. I intend to write an article about this, but for the time being I just mention them.



With regard to all these points, and with more than just empirical hard facts, I shall dwell on the discursive and imminently conceptual analysis of the threats, many of which I believe to be quite real; accordingly, I will focus on the mechanics of an effective, albeit incipient, ongoing securitization policy, which I believe to be amply justified. In order to show why, I shall equally touch on the more “kinetic” political practices that form an inescapable context of this discursive dimension. Then I will examine the framework of the security architecture outlined and will conclude by presenting considerations on what all this implies for Portugal and lusophony.

### **A serious geo-economic and geopolitical issue? The perception of risks and opportunities by the various global players**

To that effect, it is certainly useful to start examining matters in a larger geopolitical and geo-economic framework. In response to the problems we have been facing in the Persian Gulf, the West is trying to obtain fossil energy in places other than traditional ones. It would come as no surprise if in the coming years we see an increase in the already observable tendency for the Gulf of Guinea to become the new “Gulf”. If we focus on West Africa in this regard, the numbers speak for themselves. All we need to do is make a simple general comparison: with an aggregate output of about 4 million barrels per day, the production of Nigeria, Gabon, and Angola – all with a huge growth potential – is about the same as the amount of crude extracted by Iran, Venezuela and Mexico combined. And there are more states in the region that have proven to be potential major producers of hydrocarbons, such as São Tomé and Príncipe and Equatorial Guinea. By 2015, the U.S. intend to increase the percentage of its oil imports from the region from the 16% to 25%<sup>7</sup>.

Still, the issue is of a political and security nature, much more than quantitative. It is not just the fact that 8% of the world oil reserves are in the Gulf of Guinea. From a security perspective, the oil fields of the new Gulf have a decisive positional advantage: almost all are located offshore, thus relatively insulated from the chronic instability that plagues a continental area that has many fragile states, many others clearly failed, and a majority of states eroded by webs of corruption and inefficiency. I am not just being pessimistic when I write that it is likely that political tension (ranging from religious and “tribal” rivalry to irredentist struggles and/or hegemonic ambitions for local and regional power and influence) will continue in sub-Saharan Africa in the coming decades.

It seems difficult to separate all this from the increasingly explicit interest shown by the U.S. and China in the region – just to mention the two most obvious examples of the “late wake up with regard to Africa” which, in the case of Europe, took place in generalized form in the late nineteenth century. Although it might seem an indirect connection – which, to some extent, it is – this is surely one of the backgrounds we will need to consider when analysing the growing relationship between Portugal, China, and a Portuguese-speaking world located around the Atlantic basin.

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<sup>7</sup> E.g. Pesce, *op. cit.*.





**Figure 1: Portuguese speaking countries around the world (map produced for Revista de Marinha)**



Something similar could be said with regard to Central and South America, where the existence of massive energy reserves have been confirmed. That much becomes obvious as we broaden the scope of the approach and include the other coast of the Atlantic and, like we did with regard to West Africa, look at the security issue in terms of economics and resources, since they play such a major role. The result is plainly clear. It is as true now as it was in 2002 – and certainly with greater force – what Portuguese journalist Jorge Nascimento Rodrigues stated, “[t]he South Atlantic [has become the] prime open maritime area emerging in the field of oil, with easy logistics and a capacity for quick response to the North Westerns powers, particularly to the new hegemony, the U.S. It is gaining strategic importance as an offshore platform with global significance and as a “corridor” of alternative supply”<sup>8</sup>. At the time, the prediction was that rapid growth would place the South Atlantic close to the world’s

<sup>8</sup> In Jorge Nascimento Rodrigues (2002). “A corrida ao ouro negro do Atlântico Sul”, in *O Ardina na Crise*, in <http://www.janelanaweb.com/crise/corrida.html>. This type of work, focusing on economic and energy issues, gave rise to current approaches that consider themselves to be less reductionist, and such interpretations obviously vary according to the political and ideological stances of the authors. For a critical analysis of the “capitalist” strategies see, as an example of all works on this topic, Sergio Ferolla and Paulo Metri, (2008). “Incertezas e cobiça sobre o petróleo do Brasil”, *Monde Diplomatique*, in <http://diplo.uol.com.br/imprima2511>. For a Deleuzian examination of the multidimensional progression of contemporary “spatiality”, see Heidrich, A. L. (2008). “A relação entre espaço mundial e território nacional sob as dinâmicas da mundialização”, in Oliveira, M. P.; Coelho, M. C. N; Corrêa, A. de M. (Orgs.) *O Brasil, a América Latina e o Mundo: espacialidades contemporâneas*: vol. 1, pp. 77-91, Rio de Janeiro.

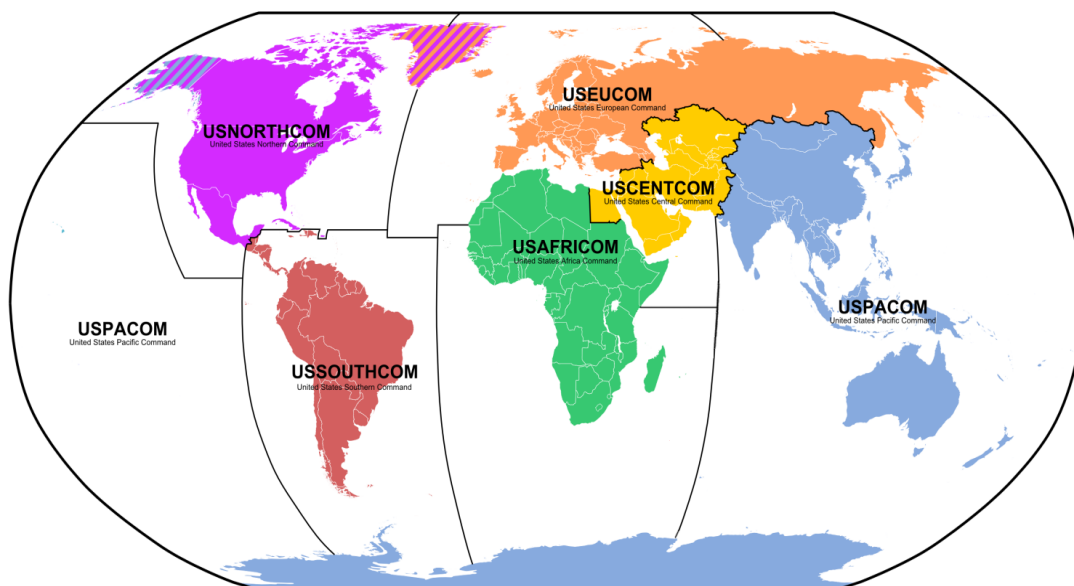


largest producers before the end of the decade, thus recognized in terms of its weight as a player.

The quantification has proved to be prophetic. This prediction of the beginning of our century remained on all fronts in the following years and was joined by a new and understandable – albeit apparently somehow unexpected, political and military concern. As the aforementioned African General João de Matos put it crisply, “despite not having major constraints and being seen as a secondary and peripheral strategic area, this important route concerns the great powers, namely the western powers, not only individually but also in terms of their defensive organization, NATO, which has the words North Atlantic in its name. It is no coincidence that the U.S. has just created the Africa Command with the aim of controlling the African shores of the Atlantic [AFRICOM was created on 1 October 2008], as opposed to the Southern Command that controls the South American coasts of the same ocean. It is not by chance either that it has been supporting the training of African armies in recent years. On the other hand, NATO has begun joint exercises with and in Cape Verde on the border between the North Atlantic, its natural and statutory territory, and the South Atlantic, where, like in Afghanistan, it is likely to act in future”.

This was not new, and the Angolan analyst saw similarities with what had happened in the past: “The South Atlantic was the setting of an undeclared war between Britain and Argentina for the possession of the Falklands or the Malvinas, both names by which the war was known. The logistic difficulties for the British proved to be enormous, since they failed to have open ports and airfields in the area to enable the refuelling of its naval and air forces. In fact, at the time, most South American governments showed sympathy for the Argentine cause (Chile was the big exception, and immediately sent military contingents to the border with Argentina, opening up a new potential front), or chose to adopt a total neutral stance, which in practice undermined the British. However, the U.S intervention, particularly by opening access to crucial satellite intelligence and to the stock of weapons, fuel and communication kept at Ascension Island minimized the problem for the British and enabled them to win the war”<sup>9</sup>.

**Figure 2: North American Central Commands and their areas of jurisdiction. AFRICOM was established in 2008.**





As I will point out, this was not the only measure, far from it. As the years went by, and aware of the rising strategic centrality of the South Seas, the U.S. decided to strengthen its presence in them by restoring the historic Fourth Fleet in the region on 1 July 2008 (this fleet had been deactivated in 1950) and take other steps in the opposite coast.

I shall refer to this later, but not before drawing attention to the less blatant evidence that the U.S. is not alone in the race to the South Atlantic. Many others are doing the same, such as China, Russia and Germany, among them: a vigorous international competition is settling in becoming a new "scramble for the South" – thus creating what we could perhaps see as a new cosmopolitan opening of the ocean basin and its continental surroundings, which surely turns them into a new geopolitical arena increasingly perceived as such by the various players. That is the focus of my attention with regard to the following: the "reception" of regional political and military coalitions outlined by a resurgent Russia; the latter has responded to the economic and demographic positioning of a fully assertive China; the increasingly explicit standing of Germany, France and Spain in the sale of weapons and military equipment (air, sea, and "logistical") to this and other emerging areas, in terms of security. I shall do little more other than list facts and actions.

In purely indicative terms and as a simple list of "neuralgic" actions: China has been investing in people and infrastructure on both sides of the South Atlantic basin – nowadays there are hundreds of thousands of newly established Chinese in Angola, and many more have gone to the State of S. Paulo in Brazil<sup>10</sup>. The growing intervention of France goes hand in hand with China's, particularly in South America, in Brazil: the so-called "Rafale deal" bears witness to this, through the announced sale – still not consummated, and looking ever-more dubious – of thirty six Omni Role fighter bombers to the Brazilian Air Force (FAB); the competition goes back a couple of years and involves three fighters – the F-18 Super Hornet of the U.S Boeing, the Dassault Rafale F3, and SAAB's Grippen NG from Sweden, still at project stage. This was such a huge project that Obama personally tried to convince President Lula to prefer North American aircraft, which led Nicolas Sarkozy and Dassault to reduce the price by 2.4 billion Euros and showed their determination to keep the French position in the transaction [even though, the total cost was over 5 billion U.S. dollars]<sup>11</sup>. The recent

<sup>10</sup> Amongst an increasingly abundant literature, see Ricardo Soares de Oliveira (2007). *Oil and Politics in the Gulf of Guinea*, Hurst Publishers and Columbia University Press, and the work edited by Daniel Large, Christopher Alden and Ricardo Soares de Oliveira (2008). *China Returns to Africa: a Rising Power and a Continent Embrace*. For comparative studies about Chinese investment in Angola and Brazil, see the recent and most interesting article by Ana Cristina Alves (2010). titled "The Oil Factor in Sino-Angolan Relations at the Start of the 21st Century", Occasional Paper No. 55, *South African Institute of International Affairs*, Johannesburg.

<sup>11</sup> From the huge literature available, just two references to a purchase which, should it take place, which is increasingly less likely, could include also the acquisition of twelve Rafale Marine planes for the Brazilian aircraft carrier São Paulo (the former French Foch bought in the 1990s) and the second carrier already announced by the Brazilian Navy. With regard to the most recent hypothesis, see the ambitious and confident article by Angela Pimenta titled "França confiante na compra dos caça Rafale pelo Brasil em 2010", in Portal Exame of 21 September 2010, in <http://portalexame.abril.com.br/blogs/esquerda-direita-e-centro/2010/09/21/franca-confiante-do-anuncio-da-compra-de-cacas-rafale-pelo-brasil-em-2010/>. For a debate published on the website *Poder Aéreo* on 19 November 2009, see the article





announcement of Germany's sale of five hybrid (partly nuclear-powered) submarines to Brasilia and three to Pretoria goes along the same lines<sup>12</sup>; Angola appears to have reacted immediately, unwilling to be left out of this "race".

In turn, Russia has accelerated its regional visibility in Cuba and in Venezuela (besides the naval military exercises mentioned earlier), funding and expanding military runways in those countries to enable their use by its own strategic bombers, Tupolev-130 and maybe others<sup>13</sup> – in October 2010 Russia announced its financial and technical assistance to the creation of a "nuclear programme" in Venezuela, an offer which has since been reiterated at key moments. Everything points to the fact that a vertiginous arms race has started, not only in the North of the South Atlantic, in the Caribbean, and between Venezuela and Colombia.

### **The growing awareness of risks by regional players**

Reactions to this generalized influx of the global major powers were quick to come, and they are not difficult to understand in view of the regional cognitive and security frameworks. To give a handful of examples, let us start again with Brazil with regard to the specific example of the full-blown return of the U.S. navy. What follows is the interpretation of the influential Brazilian academic Luiz Alberto Moniz Bandeira in 2008, in a paper presented at the Brazilian War College which referred to the very recent reactivation of the United States Fourth Fleet. "The reactivation of the Fourth Fleet implies, of course, many U.S. strategic interests. But what makes its real goal evident is the fact that the command of the Fourth Fleet was handed over to Real Admiral Joseph Kernan, an officer of the US Navy SEALs (United States Navy Sea, Air and Land Forces), consisting of the Special Operations Forces of the War Navy and which are employed in direct action and special reconnaissance missions and capable of undertaking unconventional warfare, foreign internal defence and counter-terrorism operations. One of the components of the Fourth Fleet is the amphibious assault ship USS Kearsarge (LHD 3), whose main mission is to transport, deploy and land forces anywhere in the world and act as Expeditionary Strike Group, a military concept introduced in the U.S. War Navy in the beginning of the 1990s. It consists of highly mobile and self-sustaining forces that carry out missions in various parts of the globe. Its "humanitarian mission" started in Santa Marta, Colombia, in coordination with the General Command of the Armed Forces and the National Army of Colombia".

Following an argument widely shared by the elites of his country, Moniz Bandeira went further, in the presence of the higher ranks of his country, and offered an economic explanation for Washington's reconfiguration of power in the general framework of a current version of the Monroe Doctrine: "it is clear that the United States, with its

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"Dassault oferece itens adicionais para tentar vender o Rafale para o Brasil", in <http://www.aereo.jor.br/2009/11/14/dassault-oferece-itens-adicionais-para-tentar-vender-o-rafale-para-o-brasil/>; I will not cite more recent articles as the issue is fast developing, which renders them outdated quickly.

<sup>12</sup> As an example, see the translation of the article published in *Deutsche Welle*, "Germany doubles arms exports", an article republished in Brazil on 15 April 2010, and available at <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,5357723,00.html>.

<sup>13</sup> See, as an example, the article "Russia may send strategic bombers to Cuba, Venezuela", an *Interfax* news published in the North American website *Bloomberg* and available at [http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=az\\_dyBk1Y3T0](http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=az_dyBk1Y3T0), which quotes Major-General Anatoly Zhikharev, Commander-in-Chief of Russia's Strategic Aviation.



command of the sea and space, has never ceased to have war ships travelling in the international waters of South America, despite the fact that the Fourth Fleet, created in 1943 during the Second World War, had officially been dissolved in 1950. Its restructuring does not mean major changes in U.S. military activities in the South Atlantic, since 38% of its global trade takes place with countries in that hemisphere, 34% of its oil imports come from the region and 2/3 of the ships transiting through the Panama Canal are going to U.S. ports. It merely made official a presence that had never ceased to exist, with the aim of demarcating and reaffirming the South Atlantic as an area under its control, particularly given the discovery of large deposits of oil in the Tupi field in the pre-salt layer off the coast of S. Paulo. The United States is concerned with the growing presence of China in South America and wishes to control its mineral and energy resources, such as the Mutum iron deposits and the natural gas reserves in Bolivia, Argentina's Patagonia and the Guarani Aquifer, which is the largest groundwater reservoir in the world and is located in the countries that form the Mercosur"<sup>14</sup>.

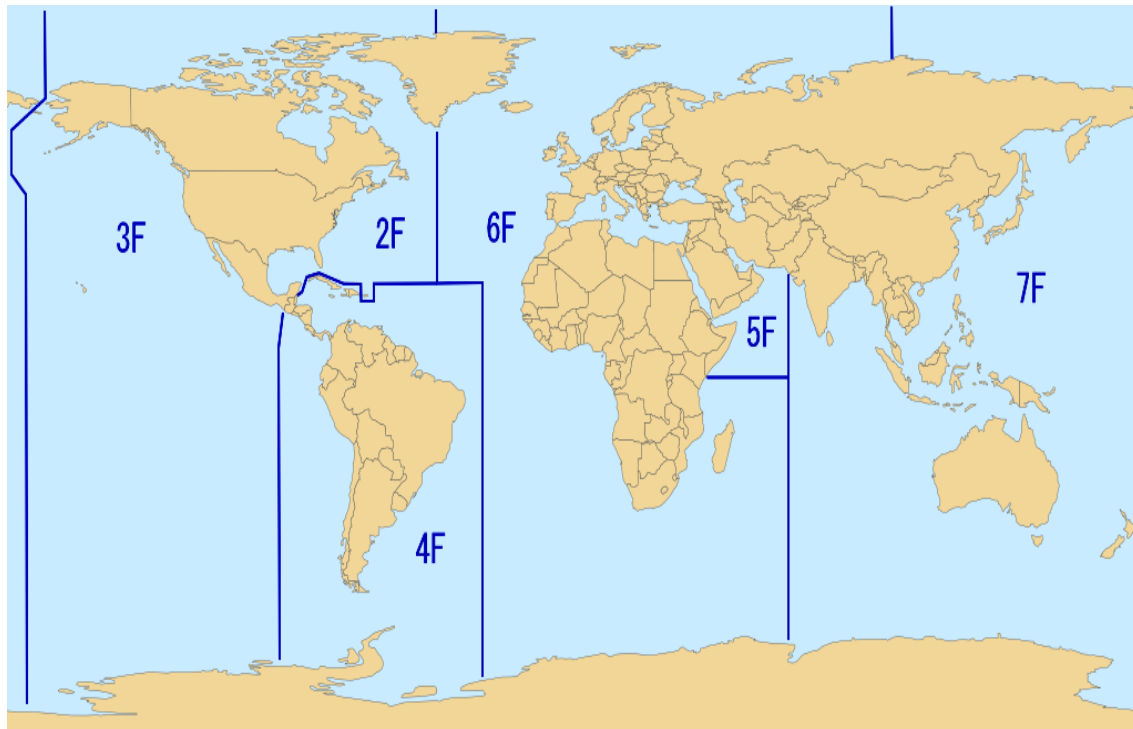
As in the text he wrote as a basis for his presentation, Moniz Bandeira stated with a pinch of political gusto that "the conflict between Russia and Georgia has shown that the 'arc of crisis' which Zbigniew Brzezinski claimed extended from Pakistan to Ethiopia encircling the Middle East is much broader, covering all Central Asia and the Caucasus. Faced with this situation, the geopolitical importance of South America increased further in the security strategy of the U.S., which is seeking oil and gas supply sources in more stable regions. Even Halford J. Mackinder, in the conference he made in 1904 on 'The Geographical Pivot of History', stressed that the development of the vast potentialities of South America could have a 'decisive influence' on the international system of power and strength the United States or, on the other side, Germany, if the latter successfully challenged the Monroe Doctrine". Moniz Bandeira concluded with recommendations to the Brazilian military, explaining that "the economic and commercial [aspect] certainly weighed on the U.S. decision to reactivate the Fourth Fleet in the South Atlantic, with the prospect that the region becomes a major oil producing centre as a result of the recent discovery of fields in the pre-salt layer off the coast of São Paulo and which probably extends across the south to the coast of Argentina. [...] *A Second Cold War has started involving South America, where the penetration of the United States is a factor of instability and unrest. The high degree of internal turbulence and the resistance and opposition of the majority of governments to the will of the United States clearly attests the fading of its hegemony in a region where once its fiat had the force of law, and which reflects profoundly its global strategy to impose the Pax Americana, i.e. 'preserving and extending an international order that is friendly to our security, our prosperity and our principles' according to the guidelines of the Project for the New American Century (PNAC)*"<sup>15</sup> [my italics]. These are intent processes that are certainly understood by a respected scholar as legitimate aspirations of a rising power that increasingly responds to a pan-continental geopolitical doctrine that it considers anachronistic, inappropriate and detrimental to its overall interests.

<sup>14</sup> These statements [their translation is ours] can be found in Luiz Alberto Moniz Bandeira (2008). "A importância geopolítica da América do Sul na estratégia dos Estados Unidos", *Revista Espaço Acadêmico*, 89, <http://www.espacoacademico.com.br/089/89bandeira.htm>, in a paper presented at a Conference held at *Escola Superior de Guerra* (the Brazilian top War College).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*



**Figure 3 - U.S. Fleets and their areas of responsibility**



None of this is too surprising or truly innovative, even less in the political climate the country is experiencing. However, over the past few years, there have been many proponents of an alternative to the emergence of a North American hegemony in the South Atlantic. For example, another Brazilian analyst close to Brazilian policy makers in his country, Humberto França, wrote in an article published on 5 June 2009 in *Diário de Pernambuco*, significantly titled "Brazil and oil in the South Atlantic", which was subsequently republished by the Brazilian Ministry of Education in a prominent space<sup>16</sup>: "the Atlantic Ocean is the first in terms of movement of goods and is of major strategic importance. The south of that sea was explored by Portuguese navigators who settled on the coasts of Africa and America over five centuries ago, and, after a long historical process, those lands led to the formation of Portuguese-speaking countries which, *if driven by Brazil*, [my italics] will currently consolidate a community that is increasingly more important on the world stage. In the post-crisis world, Brazil will emerge as an undisputed economic power and will need to address new challenges. First, it will need to maintain its engagement policy with its neighbours in South America, support and expand the Mercosur, and, at the same time, foster a more comprehensive relationship with African countries, especially with West African nations. In addition, it will also need to focus its attention on strengthening the Community of Portuguese Speaking

<sup>16</sup>

<http://www.fundaj.gov.br/notitia/servlet/newstorm.ns.presentation.NavigationServlet?publicationCode=16&pageCode=377&textCode=13194&date=currentDate>. Again, our translation.



Countries – CPLP. The recent discovery of large oil deposits in the South Atlantic basin surely demonstrates that there are still untapped natural resources almost totally unknown – and, of course, this is something which will inevitably alter the geopolitical composition of the region. It is known that the South Atlantic has aroused the interest of current hegemonic powers”. This aspect is currently even more present, for which reason I want to refer to it here.

Humberto França could not have put it clearer when he bluntly stated what had been perceived by several states: “China, for instance, has already demonstrated it wishes to benefit from those huge oil reserves. A few months ago [from 1 December 2008] a powerful Russian fleet visited the South Atlantic ports of Venezuela. And American ships have been sailing those seas for a long time. Therefore, it is time Brazil undertakes a major effort to equip our navy with the latest technology in order to lead an integration process with the Defence Forces of some of the CPLP member states, Angola, Guinea-Bissau, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Cape Verde. In addition, our country should also invite Argentina, Uruguay and perhaps South Africa to join this enterprise in order to form a network of economic and military cooperation capable of ensuring the control of the immense wealth lying in the seabed of that region. This way we shall be able to preserve the security of our coastal areas. We also know that the oil and gas reserves in Angola, Guinea-Bissau and São Tomé are huge. Still, with regard to our security, it should be stressed that Brazil should also initiate studies to establish a military base shared with its allies in Cape Verde. This country, whose territory is 500 kilometres off the West African coast and very close to the northeast coast, is in major strategic position for controlling the South Atlantic. Cape Verde is located very near the most important north-south shipping routes. Our initiative would not cause military imbalance, since the United States, in conjunction with NATO, has long maintained an important military at Lajes, in the Azores. And the Falkland Islands, under British rule, provided that it serves the interests of the countries of that organization, can host major military installations to serve the interests of Northern countries”<sup>17</sup>. Once more this was a cry of alarm, and, again, one of exemplary clarity shouted at high impact arenas.

Indeed, more formal reactions based on past legal formalities came soon, which somehow found an echo in the reactivation of the U.S. Fourth Fleet. In 2005, Pesce stated that “[t]he President signed Decree No. 5.484 of 30 June 2005 without any fanfare or publicity, approving a new National Defence Policy (NDP) for Brazil. This decree came into force on the date of its publication in the Official Gazette, issue no. 125 of 1 July 2005. Decree no. 5.484 also stipulates that the organs and entities of the Federal Government should consider actions that contribute to strengthening national defence in their planning. Predominantly geared to external threats, the new NDP consists of a political part (dealing with concepts, international and national affairs, and with defence objectives) and of a strategic part (which covers guidelines and directives)” [...]. The normative document divides Brazilian defence policy into two areas. “In the Amazon, priority is given to the need for strategic actions aimed at strengthening military presence, the effective action of the state in development, and at expanding cooperation with neighbouring countries”. In the South Atlantic, primacy goes to the need for resources to carry out surveillance and the defence of Brazilian territorial waters in the “Blue Amazon”, as well as to ensure the security of sea lines of

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*



communication. The need to exercise surveillance, control and defence of Brazilian air space is also stressed. The possibility of using armed forces against internal threats, aiming at preserving sovereignty and national unity, is equally considered.

These dispositions also include the following: work in order to keep a climate of peace and cooperation at the borders; strengthen exchanges with the armed forces of friendly nations, especially in South America and West Africa; contribute to regional integration, with emphasis on the industrial basis of defence; play an active role in decisions on the fate of Antarctica; have the capacity for power projection for overseas operations; establish new partnerships with friendly countries in order to develop defence technologies; participate in humanitarian or peacekeeping missions, according to national interests; and increasingly participate in international decision *fora*, with the aim of increasing the bargaining power of the country"<sup>18</sup>. Indeed, a true map. One which also constitutes a solid security basis for a possible definition of the strength capacity of a new, more pro-active foreign policy that Brazil, feeling harassed and in search of an international affirmation consistent with the importance it believes it has today, wishes to pursue.

Given Brazil's historical grievances against the U.S., none of this is strange or should in any way come as a surprise. What is indeed sweeping is the fact that the convergence of concerns appears to be accelerating the process of rapprochement, albeit in an extreme formal and official way, between the two opponent states of the South Atlantic coast, namely Argentina and Brazil. The Argentines have also been paying attention to security issues in the South Atlantic, somehow "baptizing" it in terms of security. Thus, to give just one paradigmatic example, German Montenegro, former Secretary for Strategy and Military Affairs at the Ministry of Defence, and a Professor at the National University of Quilmes, in Argentina, in an interview given on 2 April 2010, made a series of assertions which are relevant even now, stating that "today we can speak of the problem of the South Atlantic, involving many players and interests, which has to do with the use of natural resources. The example of the Falklands is a symptom of what may happen in the regions in the coming years. We must remember that the international security scenario in the region has undergone major changes. We have a superpower, the United States, but also other rising powers, like Brazil. At the same time, we witness the deterioration of the multilateral system caused by many unilateral initiatives that only benefit the countries with more power. In this context, the natural resources issue has become a major security question. Before, it was fish, now it is oil"<sup>19</sup>. In this, as in other documents, the message is a clear rapprochement-convergence.

Consequences of this were not long coming. With the suggestive title "*De Olho no Atlântico Sul*" ("An Eye on the South Atlantic"), on 27 May 2010 *Itamaraty* published the following: the well-known football rivalry between Brazil and Argentina, even in World Cup years, was set aside in the name of science. The two countries came together in a satellite development project aimed at surveying the oceans, which is crucial for monitoring climate change. The Brazilian Space Agency (AEB), together with the Spatial Activities National Commission (Conae) of Argentina will work on the

<sup>18</sup> In Eduardo ItaloPesce (2005). "A nova política de defesa nacional", *Segurança e Defesa*, [http://www.segurancaedefesa.com/Nova\\_PDN.htm](http://www.segurancaedefesa.com/Nova_PDN.htm)]. Once more, our translation.

<sup>19</sup> In an interview to *Opera Mundi* on 2 April 2010, which can be accessed at [http://operamundi.uol.com.br/noticias\\_ver.php?idConteudo=3500](http://operamundi.uol.com.br/noticias_ver.php?idConteudo=3500)





assembly of the *Sabia-Mar* satellite, which will observe the oceans globally and monitor the Atlantic near the two countries. The estimated investment in this project is approximately \$140 million, said the president of AEB, Carlos Ganem, in an interview to the State of Minas. He said that the preliminary technical study prepared by experts from the two countries pointed to a four-year schedule to launch the satellite. Accordingly, "under normal conditions, including with regard to funding", the satellite should be launched in 2014. One of the options examined is to launch it using the Cyclone 4 rocket. In this case, activities will take place at the Alcântara Launch Centre, in Maranhão. The National Institute for Space Research (INPE) will be the executing agency of this project"<sup>20</sup>.

Is this really new? To a large extent, it is not. From the 1980s, the two states, once fierce opponents, were able to multilateralize their foreign nuclear policies – and since the 1990s they have adjusted them as needed. The signing of the Non-Proliferation Treaty by the two countries, the abandonment by Argentina of its ballistic missile programme, and, by Brazil, of its nuclear weapons, was a major step to this effect. However, it was not the only one in a context of multiple signs of approximation, which was not without important implications. As the renowned Brazilian academic Celso Lafer, at the time Minister of Foreign Affairs of President Fernando Henrique Cardoso, stated shortly after September 11, "[t]he approximation between Brazil and Argentina reversed bilateral relations, which ceased to be a factor of uncertainty for the strategic balance in South America and became instead a guarantee of peace and stability in the region"<sup>21</sup>. This reinterpretation is significant, as it shows that more important interests prevailed.

It seems that these interests are widely shared. Far from being a one-sided stance on Brazil's part, these emerging convergences, very unlikely until recently, are multifold and significant. A unique example is representative of all. With regard to the recent revival of the Malvinas/Falklands question, Argentine G. Montenegro responded to the point, not unlike the Brazilians or the Angolans: "[i]n recent years, Argentina, Chile, Brazil, and Great Britain presented proposals to extend the so-called Continental Shelf (CS) to the UN's commission on limits. This refers to the natural extension of the countries, exceeding the 200 miles of their exclusive economic zone up to a limit of 350 miles from the coastline. Once the UN has recognized this shelf, the coastal state has the right to explore soil and marine subsoil resources. Other tensions have emerged as a result of the discovery of significant oil reserves in Brazilian waters, and of the importance of lithium, for example, in Bolivia. All this confers the region a new geo-strategic importance. *From this point of view also, the picture is changing. Our region enjoys relative calm. However, in recent years we have seen diplomatic conflicts arise, including quite intense military activities: between Ecuador and Colombia, between Colombia and Venezuela, not to mention the reactivation of the American Fourth Fleet, the relationship of some countries with Iran, and the invitation made by Venezuela to Russia for its warships to carry out military exercises in the region. So far, these facts are not able to trigger conflicts, but one must be attentive*"[my italics]<sup>22</sup>.

<sup>20</sup> Article available for download at <http://www.itamaraty.gov.br/sala-de-imprensa/selecao-diarial-de-noticias/midiasnacionais/brasil/estado-de-minas/2010/05/27/de-olho-no-atlantico-sul>. As in the case of all texts in Portuguese and Castilian here quoted, the translations are our own.

<sup>21</sup> Speech made by Celso Lafer as MFA of Brazil on 14.08.2001.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*



The relevance of these considerations is evident. In addition to this, there is also Argentina's and Brazil's development, in tandem, of 'laser cannons' against and from satellites, and of a joint GPS system. The security baptism of the South Atlantic region appeared to be over. However, I keep insisting it is still unpaired.

Let us change quadrant and look at the opposite shore of the ocean basin. On the other side of the South Atlantic, similar concerns have been expressed on the African coast. The Angolan Navy Journal (*Revista da Marinha*) published an article titled "Major interests in the South Atlantic" which reads that "[t]he South Atlantic is today the leading open sea area that is rising in the oil business, with easy logistics and able of giving a rapid response to North Western powers, particularly the new hegemony of the US. It is assuming strategic importance as an offshore platform with global significance, acting as a 'corridor' for alternative supplies. All readers need to do is to think of the worsening of the situation in the Mediterranean, the Persian Gulf or the Bosphorus Strait (due to changes in Turkey and turmoil in the Black Sea) and an eventual total loss of control of the situation in the Caribbean Sea (turmoil in Venezuela, which is the second largest producer in Latin America after Mexico, and in Colombia) to see how the South Atlantic can be a real safety valve. The battle for political, military and economic control of this vast maritime area will therefore become more acute in coming years." Echoing the concerns of Brazil, the anonymous Angolan author, by way of explaining the possible North American reasons for this political control, added: "the combined oil production of the Member States of the Gulf of Guinea Commission (CGG) currently exceeds five million barrels/day and represents about 16 percent of the world production. International studies indicate that the sub-region of the Gulf of Guinea will provide a quarter of the oil consumed by the United States by 2015. The sub-region of the Gulf of Guinea also includes the Congo Basin (the second largest body of water and forest in the world after the Amazon), which covers about two million square kilometres. The international economic traders thus should work to ensure, 'in a concerted and responsible' manner, the management of the aforesaid potential on behalf of future generations. Thus, the existence of the Gulf of Guinea Commission, which defends the common interests of states bordering the Gulf of Guinea, 'gives a comparative advantage in defining and executing global standards regarding the environment, security and development'<sup>23</sup>. Again, this shows the various regional States's will to rally together.

Is this reaction similar to that shown by South America? None of this should startle us. As António Pinheiro, a Portuguese Colonel specializing in African matters, wrote clearly, "until the end of the Cold War, the relative indifference of Washington of the African continent was based on a 'geopolitical sub-contracting' that, until then, had been tacitly agreed with France. [As of September 11, everything changed.] Under the backdrop of the War on Terror, the United States 'strategized' the African continent. Aware of its dependence on raw materials vital to its economy, which were fiercely disputed by China, and worried about "securing" its supplies in the medium term, Washington has increased political and military agreements with most African countries. The military, oil companies and U.S. security consulting companies are the key targets of this new strategy"<sup>24</sup>. Thoughtfully, Pinheiro asks a couple of indiscreet questions at the end of

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.mga.qv.ao/revistamarinha/edicao13/dossier07.htm>

<sup>24</sup> António Pinheiro (2006). "Modelos de 'africanização' das Operações de Apoio à Paz", *Nação & Defesa* 114, 3rd series, pp. 141-168: 150.



his study: "can we relate the military coup that took place in São Tomé on 16 July 2003, undertaken by a group of soldiers led by Major Fernando Pereira 'Cobó', to the previous specific training and participation of these men both in the ECCAS multinational force of the 2nd cycle of RECAMP (GABON 2000) and to the lusophone force involved in CPLP exercises (FELINO 2000) in Brazil? As another possible study, we suggest a Guinean case. Is there any relationship between the October 2004 coup (which led to the assassination of General Veríssimo Seabra) perpetrated by a group of military recently returned home and their participation in the Guinean battalion involved in the ECOWAS multinational force planned in September 2003 for the Theatre of Operations in Liberia"?<sup>25</sup>. The answers that have been advanced are only too obvious and have been increasing in number.

At this point it becomes essential to put such matters into their wider context. The Rwanda debacle that caused so much damage to the Elysée and Quai d'Orsay ambitious "France-Afrique" project was followed by a diffuse business diplomacy conducted by Warren Christopher from 1996 with increasingly more influential, such as the *Pan-Sahel Initiative* (PSI), which had been operational since November 2003. It was conducted by US-EUCOM forces and aimed, on both coasts of the continent, to help Mali, Chad, Niger, and Mauritania fight smuggling, terrorist networks and organized crime, as part of the ACOTA (African Contingency Operations Training Assistance) programme that had been created by the Bush administration in the Spring of 2002 to replace the former ACRI (African Crisis Response Initiative) and quickly complemented by the Africa Regional Peacekeeping (ARP), whose main beneficiaries were West African states like Nigeria, Senegal, Ghana, and Guinea-Conakry, countries where the U.S. could then transfer some military technology. A new programme joined the previous ones from 2003: the *International Military Educational and Training Program* (IMET), a specific programme for military training in units and establishments of the U.S. Armed Forces, which grants scholarships to officers of all countries with which Washington maintains "friendly" relations<sup>26</sup>.

Let us look at the issue in fast-forward mode: the process seems unstoppable, even with the Obama Administration now in power in Washington. As has been the case of other powers I have mentioned earlier, American power has been positioning itself in a systematic, cumulative and inclusive manner, which its opponents attempt to counter-act, in a region whose centrality is constantly increasing. Admittedly, the discourses have been very different. But looking at the two main players, the ascending Brazilian giant and the U.S., one sees a concept widely accepted in Brazil and in the United States that building a credible security system for the new region is becoming urgent. Not surprisingly, each has been reacting according to its own interests and in terms of corresponding domestic political 'ecosystems'. The Bush Administration did things in its usual way, by regionally deploying forces. The Lula Administration in Brazil, along the same lines, about six years ago decided to respond pro-actively. Indeed, formal reactions were soon to come, based on past legal formalities, largely to counter-act the build-up triggered by President Hugo Chavez of Venezuela and which, somehow, found an echo in the reactivation of the U.S. Fourth Fleet. Indeed, securitization, albeit at

<sup>25</sup> *Op. cit.*: 167-168. More than just a work on the "Africanization" of the PSOs, the article provides a useful comparative survey of the French, U.S. and Portuguese "African policy" in the post bi-polar period.

<sup>26</sup> As A. Pinheiro wrote in 2006, "currently 44 African countries participate in the IMET. Over the past three years, about 4.500 African officers have benefitted from this programme. The main beneficiaries have been Botswana, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Senegal, and South Africa" (*op. cit.*: 156).



different levels of intensity, but with a tendency to grow, has been part of the mental landscape, the mind space of policy makers who, in Brazil, think about the South Atlantic. The normative acts generated in the country seem to be leading to a relatively high intensity, preventive and polarizing discourse that contextually “securitizes” (and in the opinion of some, over-securitizes) the implicit interpretations they have in terms of the structural place occupied by Brazil in the international order – a point I shall return to soon – thereby turning a cyclical reaction into a structural situation.

In 2005 a new law came into force called *The Brazilian National Defence Policy*<sup>27</sup>. It was a short, incisive and very innovative text with regard to what had previously been done in the country. As affirmed by Pesce, “the President of the Republic signed Decree no. 5.484 on 30 June 2005, which was the new Brazil’s National Defence Policy (NPD), without any fanfare or publicity”. This decree came into force on the date of its publication in the Official Gazette, issue no. 125 of 1 July 2005. Decree no. 5.484 also stipulates that the organs and entities of the Federal Government should consider actions that contribute to strengthening national defence in their planning. Predominantly geared to external threats, the new NDP consists of a political part (dealing with concepts, international and national affairs, and with defence objectives) and of strategic part (which covers guidelines and directives)” [...]. As underlined above, the normative document divides Brazilian defence policy into two areas and, indeed, constitutes as if a map of Brazilian security worries – and it also constitutes a solid security basis for a possible definition of the strength capacity of a new, more pro-active foreign policy that Brazil, feeling harassed and in search of an international affirmation consistent with the importance it believes it has today, wishes to pursue.

Without wishing to conduct an analysis that would be inappropriate here, it is worth going a little deeper and examine the text and the formulation of Brazil’s diplomas in detail, given that this *National Defence Policy* (NDP) was a few years later, in late 2008, complemented by a clearer and more extensive *National Defence Strategy* (NDS). The Diploma was published in Decree no 6.703, of 18 December 2008 issued by the Planalto Palace and was signed by President Lula, and by Roberto Mangabeira Unger, a renowned professor at Harvard Law School, at the time in office as Minister of Strategy<sup>28</sup>.

Part II of this National Defence Strategy, entitled “Implementation Measures” lists what is perceived to be the “main vulnerabilities of the current defence structure of the

<sup>27</sup> For the core document which acted as a basis for the diploma titled *Política de Defesa Nacional*, see [http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil\\_03/ Ato2004-2006/2005/Decreto/D5484.htm](http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/ Ato2004-2006/2005/Decreto/D5484.htm). In a very critical and incisive article titled “National Defence Strategy. Reorganization and Transformation of the Armed Forces” *Interesse Nacional*: April/June, 71-83, Brazil, Eliézer Rizzo de Oliveira (2009), a Law Professor at the University of Campinas, who writes that it was about time, following the troubled relationship of the first years of the first term of office of President Lula da Silva. According to Rizzo de Oliveira, “the new version of the National Defence Policy, passed in 2005, was the most prominent positive factor in the relations between the President and National Defence in his first term of office” (*ibid.*, p. 73).

<sup>28</sup> The title is precisely *National Defence Strategy* and can be accessed at [http://www.fab.mil.br/portal/defesa/estrategia\\_defesa\\_nacional\\_portugues.pdf](http://www.fab.mil.br/portal/defesa/estrategia_defesa_nacional_portugues.pdf). According to Eliézer Rizzo de Oliveira, “The background for the multiple discomfort in the relations between political power and the military was the frail structure and weakness of the Ministry of Defence, which did not direct the Armed Forces effectively and did not defend their interests (for the sake of National Defence) with the President of the Republic and the ministers of the mighty economic area. [...] Another important aspect to understand the context in which the decision to establish the National Defence strategy was made was Venezuela’s acquisition of arms, ships and military aircraft, under the command of President Hugo Chavez, and its strategic alliance with Cuba, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Nicaragua. This disturbed the Brazilian top military echelons, who feared Brazil’s loss of military capacity in the regional arena”; *op. cit.*: 73.



country”, which include, it claims, the “obsolescence of most equipment of the Armed Forces, insufficient resources, and inadequate procurement policy, among other factors”. It specifies the functions and roles to be undertaken by each of the three branches of the Armed Forces (Navy, Army, and Air Force, listed in that order). In addition to the “classical” concept of defence, it introduced that of “security”, which greatly enhances the scope for future action and responsibilities of Brazilian Armed Forces. The National Defence Strategy is written assertively and emphatically right from the preface, unlike the conservative tone of the diploma that preceded it in 2005. It assumes that the country already has what has been called a “manifest destiny”<sup>29</sup>, by stating that “if Brazil wishes to occupy the place it deserves in the world, it needs to be prepared to defend itself not only from attacks but also from threats”. With regard to the status it affirms the country occupies in the international order, the National Defence Strategy states that “Brazil will rise to the forefront of the world without exercising hegemony or domination. The Brazilian people do not want to exercise command over other people. Brazilians want Brazil to get bigger without dominating others”.

It would have been difficult to be clearer about the intention to ensure Brazil will become a first rank power. The document unmistakably shows that the National Defence Strategy goes beyond “ensuring Brazil’s prominent position in the group of nations and increased participation in international decision-making processes”: As Rizzo de Oliveira openly put it<sup>30</sup>, the implicit assertion contained in the adopted Defence Strategy is abundantly clear: “Brazil will become a power”. A statement of such force and magnitude could not but lead to tempers heating up in the region, and trigger defensive prevention actions. The discourse could not go unnoticed by any minimally attentive observers; and indeed it did not.

### Fracturing and merging lines and discourses on security

However, it would be a mistake to stick too closely and in a vacuum to these “securitization” speech acts – as, say, one might be led to, in the wake of the theses proposed by the Copenhagen School. A brief case story illustrates the disparities between discourse reactions and others that this state of affairs may trigger. I classify my next example as “benign”. As has been noted, for several years Portuguese foreign policy has tried to rebalance its core objectives – a focus on the European Union, on NATO, and on the historical area of the Portuguese language. Amongst other forms,

<sup>29</sup> The statement, which replicates and historically re-dimensions its American counterpart *Manifest Destiny*, was made by Professor Darc Costa, who wrote “if there is a principle that summarizes the whole concept of Brazil’s national strategy, that principle is the idea that today Brazil is the only craftsman of true globalization, which is the result of our colonization and Portuguese immigration. This is the manifest destiny of Brazil, something that follows naturally from the fact that Brazilian people are the direct descendants of those who started the process, the Portuguese, and the only people with the right magical characteristics capable of building a single human homeland. We will do a quick overview of these magical features, as our objective is to draw a background where our national strategy unfolds. Thus, I shall describe the most important magical characteristics that the Brazilian people possess and which will enable the completion of globalization”. A Fifth Empire vision. Darc Costa is the Coordinator of the Centre for Strategic Studies at the justly famous War College (ESG) in Brazil, as well as President of the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of South America (FEDERASUR), which is an entity with global representation that strives for the integration of Latin America. The full text where the above sentence was taken from is available at <http://www.cepen.org/2008/11/estrategia-nacional-e-a-imigracao-darc-costa/3/>, as part of an article from 2008 titled “National Strategy and Immigration”.

<sup>30</sup> *Op. cit.*.





this has been done by "paying more attention to the North and South Atlantic, i.e. the strategic square that connects Lisbon to the U.S., Brazil and Angola"<sup>31</sup>. "Back in 2009, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Luís Amado argued for a "re-centralization of the NATO strategy in the geographic space of the Atlantic", where "the privileged relations between Portugal and Africa, the Mediterranean countries and, particularly, Brazil" could be better used. At the same time, he rejected the "world police" <sup>32</sup> tag, a label often given to NATO, in what a young researcher studying and publishing in Portugal named Pedro Seabra described as "a clear attempt to pre-emptively attack any possible suspicion that his proposals could encourage"<sup>33</sup>.

A few months later, the then new Minister of National Defence, Augusto Santos Silva, revisited the issue and detailed the reasons for it, following a series of publications connected to the Atlantic Alliance<sup>34</sup>, and stressing the importance of "reinforcing cooperation on an equal basis with both Africa and South America in order to tackle common security risks – such as illegal immigration, drugs, arms, human trafficking, and terrorism – would be mutually beneficial and would allow a better understanding of the perils and gains that could spring from this particular region".

Never very risk-prone or creative, Amado merely added the CPLP to this. His successor continued the focus, insisting that there was a "gap" in the draft of NATO's new Strategic Concept, as the document "did not pay as much attention to the South as it should". Countries like Portugal, said Santos Silva, along the same lines as Amado and calling for common self-representations among a large proportion of Portuguese elites, "contribute to the transatlantic debate and have the potential of knowing how to dialogue with the South and to understand the South".

Understandably, the Brazilian Administration began to express concerns, in pugnacious tones and formats, over this persistent political and diplomatic discourse on the part of Lisbon – a Lisbon which was evidently determined to increase its external influence<sup>35</sup>, undertaken as part of an increasingly active and encompassing foreign policy. The Brazilian concerns were vividly expressed by Brasília's then Defence Minister Nelson Jobim.

In a conference at the National Defence Institute in Lisbon, Jobim stated that the South Atlantic is "a strategic area of vital interest to Brazil", and that "the security issues of

<sup>31</sup> Paulo Gorjão (2010). "The end of a cycle: rebalancing and redefining Portugal's foreign policy" (IPRIS Lusophone Countries Bulletin, No. 3, January): 6, Lisbon. On this topic, but with a more specific focus – a detailed discussion on how this has been done in a limited and understudied area: enhanced image in terms of police, "not so much military", force – see also the monograph by Armando Marques Guedes and Luís Elias (2011). *Controlos Remotos. Dimensões Externas da Segurança Interna em Portugal*, Instituto Superior de Ciências Policiais e Segurança Interna, Almedina, Lisbona nd Coimbra.

<sup>32</sup> Luís Amado (2009). "Luís Amado defends "recentering" on the Atlantic and stresses the role played by Portugal in the relationships with Africa and Brazil" (Lusa, 26 March), quoted in Pedro Seabra (2010). "South Atlantic crossfire. Portugal in-between Brazil and NATO", IPRIS, *Viewpoints*, downloaded on 2 March 2010 from [www.ipris.org/php/download.php?fid=304](http://www.ipris.org/php/download.php?fid=304)

<sup>33</sup> Pedro Seabra (2010). "South Atlantic crossfire. Portugal in-between Brazil and NATO", IPRIS, *Viewpoints*, downloaded on 2 March 2010 from [www.ipris.org/php/download.php?fid=304](http://www.ipris.org/php/download.php?fid=304). This young Portuguese researcher has published several interesting articles, of which I would like to stress the following: (2009), "A summer fling in South America. U.S. bases and a weapons race", *ViewPoints*, IPRIS, October; (2010), "UNASUR.South America's wishful thinking", *Viewpoints*, IPRIS, February; (2010). "ECOWAS and the Brazilian foothold in Africa", *Viewpoints*, IPRIS, September; and (2011). "An ocean apart. Angola, Brazil and the need for a strategic framework", *Viewpoints*, IPRIS, March.

<sup>34</sup> Of which the following stand out: Nikolas Gvosdev (2009). "Expand the West by Looking South" (*Atlantic Council*, 7 June), as well as NATO's report (2010). *NATO 2020: Assured Security; Dynamic Engagement*, Brussels, from which I took the quotation above.

<sup>35</sup> Paulo Gorjão (2010) *op. cit.*, and Armando Marques Guedes and Luís Elias (2011). *op. cit.*.



the two oceans [are] markedly different. The same could be said, he continued, of the alleged "Mid-Atlantic"<sup>36</sup>. The presence of NATO or of the United States there, he insisted, is "untimely" and "inappropriate"<sup>37</sup>. The timing and location of the intervention did not go unnoticed to minimally attentive observers. This did not end here, and, a few days later, in a five-day official visit to the US, Jobim met the Secretary for Homeland Security, Janet Napolitano, and attended a series of lectures at George Washington University and at Johns Hopkins University. According to the Brazilian publication *Estado de S. Paulo*, Jobim wasted no opportunity to refer to the "NATO issue", particularly at his meeting with Arturo Valenzuela, Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs, to whom he repeated the message he had vehemently stated at the NDI in Lisbon a week earlier.

Jobim did not stop here: on 3 November 2010, at the *Tenth Conferência do Forte de Copacabana*, in Brazil, at an activity organized by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, he restated the Brazilian government's opposition to any form of "sharing sovereignty over the Atlantic", stating that "neither Brazil or South America could accept that the Americans or NATO claimed any right to intervene in any theatre of operations, at any possible pretext"<sup>38</sup>. This time, at the *Forte de Copacabana*, former minister Jobim detailed the reasons for Brazil's concerns: for instance, the non-ratification by the U.S. Administration of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (Montego Bay), explaining that Brazil was naturally concerned to ensure its rights with regard to hydrocarbon reserves and other resources found in the so-called "Blue Amazon", as well as across its Exclusive Economic Zone". Brazil's attitude of opposition and distrust remained unaltered: as Pedro Seabra pointed out in a footnote of the article previously mentioned, "this topic was again brought up during the CPLP's 10th Defence Minister Meeting in Brasília on November 10th, where Nelson Jobim stood his ground, while Santos Silva tried to defuse any existing tensions and doubts" as to the reason of the Portuguese stance and intensions, with some degree of success. Was this a demonstration of Brazil's growing inflexibility against the presence of the U.S. in the southern region of the Atlantic basin?

In terms of discourse, it was certainly so, and moreover in a sustained manner. However, let us examine other less rhetorical and more "kinetic" aspects of U.S.-Brazil bilateral policies, given their contrast with the discursive manifestations. We shall first put them into context and focus on the eastern vertical strip I mentioned earlier that runs along western Africa.

As a matter of fact, American securitization of the West African coast dates back a few years. The Hula Bell plan for "out of area" NATO operations was active between 1983

<sup>36</sup> Nelson A. Jobim at the closing session of the International Conference titled "O Futuro da Comunidade Transatlântica" (10 September 2010).

<sup>37</sup> Nelson A. Jobim (2010), NATO presence in South Atlantic "inappropriate" says Brazil", MercoPress (16 September), accessed on 2 March 2011 at <http://en.mercopress.com/2010/09/16/nato-presence-in-south-atlantic-inappropriate-says-brazil>

<sup>38</sup> Cláudia Antunes (2010), "Ministro da Defesa ataca estratégia militar de EUA e OTAN para o Atlântico Sul" (*Folha de S. Paulo*, 4 November), downloaded on 2 March 2011 from <http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/mundo/825261-ministro-da-defesa-ataka-estrategia-militar-de-eua-e-otan-para-o-atlantico-sul.shtml>. Governments such as the U.S. "do not recognize the legal status of countries like Brazil, which has 350 miles of its continental shelf under its sovereignty". Hence its uncompromising harshness: "how can we talk about the South Atlantic with a country that does not recognize the titles referred to by the UN? The Atlantic it refers to, is it the one up to the Brazilian coast, or the one that extends beyond 350 miles off the Brazilian coast?" More than a set attitude, I believe these statements are evidence of a negotiating stance which focuses Brasília's diplomatic guns on the central dispute Brazil wants to see solved.



and 1986. For Portugal and other allies, under the then CINCIBERLANT, the defence of the Cape Route represented the main concern. In addition, two Brazilian frigates and one submarine (Tamoio) participated in the Linked Seas exercise in the late 1990s, at the initiative of CINCIBERLANT and of Vice-Admiral Nuno Vieira Matias, a Portuguese. They carried Portuguese liaison officers who had NATO codes and publications which the Brazilians had obviously no access to, as their officers did not belong to a Member-State of the Alliance. According to some Portuguese participants, the Brazilian officials liked this exercise with NATO very much, as it conferred them "status". In the twenty first century, the American military presence in the area increased. The U.S. send a naval force to the South American coast every year to carry out exercises with the local navies, as part of an operation called UNITAS.

For two or three years Portugal also participated with frigates of the "Comandante João Belo" class, and so did Spain. Since the beginning of this decade, the U.S. sends an amphibious ship, or an auxiliary ship, carrying Polish, French, British, and Dutch officials, among others, to the coast of Africa – from Dakar downwards – stopping on Gulf of Guinea countries. The ship stops for a week and conducts short courses and training activities with the local navies. "*African Partnership Station* is the generic term used to describe this operation<sup>39</sup>.

There is another recent example, among many others with regard to the eastern vertical strip of the South Atlantic. Between 18 and 23 March, naval military exercises of unprecedented scale titled *Obangame Express* took place in the Gulf of Guinea,<sup>40</sup> involving nine states: the United States, Cameroon (which acted as host, housing the command centre for the joint exercise at the naval base of Doula, at the Centre for Multinational Coordination – CMC – of ECCAS), Nigeria, Gabon, São Tome and Principe, the Republic of the Congo, France, Belgium, and Spain. Seven of these countries (U.S. Cameroon, Nigeria, Gabon, France, Belgium, Spain, and the ECCAS had their ships involved in the Obangame Express wargames.

In this, as in many other cases, the truth is that the U.S. military presence in the eastern strip of the South Atlantic has been growing, as stated in the Media Fact Sheet of the Washington Embassy in Yaoundé, Cameroon: "Obangame Express is a multinational maritime military exercise organized by the United States Africa Command (headquartered in Stuttgart, Germany) and United States Naval Forces Africa (headquartered in Naples, Italy) in collaboration with Cameroon, members of the Economic Community of Central African States (CEEAC), and international partners.[....] The exercise is part of the Africa Partnership Station (APS) program of the United States Africa Command (also known as 'AFRICOM') and its international partners". On

<sup>39</sup> I quote António Pinheiro, in a private conversation we had: "The first APS took place between November 2007 and April 2008 (it was conducted still under the command of EUCOM, as AFRICOM only attained FOC (*full operational capability*) on 1 October 2008). This 'polytechnic mobile school' concept stemmed from an earlier programme called Global Fleet Station (GFS) led by U.S. SOUTHCOM, which was quite successful in the bilateral relationship between the U.S. and Central American and Caribbean countries. The training and educational offer is vast (going well beyond mil-to-mil cooperation), and the multidisciplinary team divided between the two vessels performs multiple tasks 24 hours a day. The excellent media coverage, the multinational nature of the trainers, the diversity of activities conducted in support of local populations during stopovers at African ports, and the strong participation of civilians from the area of development are skilfully [used] arguments to demonstrate the practical application of the [...] motto 'Do no harm!'; which is extensively used within AFRICOM during the training/awareness raising sessions of its staff".

<sup>40</sup> For additional information, see the quite detailed data available at the U.S. Embassy in Yaoundé, Cameroon, acceded on 15 April 2011 at <http://beegeagle.wordpress.com/2011/03/28/nigerian-navy-participate-in-multinational-sea-exercise-in-the-gulf-of-guinea/>



the ground, despite the government spin in the White House, little or nothing has changed, besides a change in some cases, perceptible in the discourse used. The U.S. commitment or investment in the area has not disappeared, nor has the acquiescence of most states in the region to rely on them.

Let us look at the other side, that of South America. On the South Atlantic vertical strip to the west, this time from the South American side, another parallel example also serves for all, in order to deconstruct illusions. From November to December 2010, the largest air exercises in the history of the continent – CRUZEX V (Operation Southern Cross, no. 5) took place in Natal, in north-eastern Brazil. At Brazil's invitation, crews and aircraft of the Air Force of the United States participated for the first time, as well as, to a lesser extent, its lateral equivalents from Chile, Uruguay, Argentina and France, side by side with Brazilians and North Americans<sup>41</sup>. This was a multinational large-scale air exercise, which, for several weeks, brought together resources from various Air Forces that followed the *modus operandi* employed by NATO. The chosen scenario was interesting: in this "double-action exercise based on a low intensity simulated conflict, the Blue Forces (Coalition Forces) fought the Red Forces (Opponent Forces). The Air Forces of guest countries make up the Coalitions Forces in the Blue Country, against the Opponent Forces"<sup>42</sup>. The multinational operation lasted from 28 October to 20 November 2010 and, with almost 950 take-offs and about 1,200 flight hours, it was the biggest exercise in simulated air warfare that ever took place in South America<sup>43</sup>. The maps used in the exercise were explicit, clearly outlining an area similar to northern South America, where Venezuela and Colombia are located. As was widely noted by Brazilian military commentators and close sources, since no country from South America is part of NATO, this was an excellent opportunity"<sup>44</sup> for the air forces of these countries to learn about the doctrines and procedures of NATO and expand their cooperation with it. And so it was done.

The point I wish to stress is the scale of such joint operations, as well as the simple fact that they were carried out despite the "speech acts" that seemed to render them unfeasible – a disparity between discourse and deed which, as far as this Southern Atlantic part is concerned, points to the realization that the process of building a security structure in the South Atlantic sub-region, albeit incipient, is not new and seems unstoppable, indicating that the new Obama Administration is worried about the opening of new areas of instability. It must also be noted that, in the case of the Latin American powers I mentioned earlier, the foreseeable reactions of Latin American, Caribbean and African entities (state or others) is to counteract, as much as their much more reduced possibilities can afford a systematic and increasing attitude of American power in a huge geopolitical region whose centrality does not cease to expand. To this

<sup>41</sup> Two *petites histoires*: according to several blogs available on the Internet, the big story on the CRUZEX V was that a French *Rafale* fighter-bomber was virtually brought down during the war games by a Northrop F-5 of the Brazilian air force – a plane of the 1970s, which had been modernized with Israeli technology. Another story concerns the interpretation that was done in several websites and in YouTube regarding the actual exercises, which were significantly called "*Hombre, porqué no te callas*" (Man, why don't you shut up?), an obvious allusion to the remark made by King Juan Carlos of Spain to Hugo Chávez a couple of years earlier.

<sup>42</sup> Check, for example, the site *Poder Aéreo* at <http://www.aereo.jor.br/2010/08/23/cruzex-v-e-a-venezuela/> on these exercises and on Venezuela's absence from them, since the latter had been a regular collaborator of the yearly CRUZEX, this one being the fifth edition.

<sup>43</sup> The official website of CRUZEX V, managed by the Brazilian air force, can be easily accessed at <http://www.fab.mil.br/portal/capa/index.php>

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*



we should perhaps add an eventual regional balancing reaction – at least in the South Atlantic vertical western strip, in face of the new assertiveness of Brazil undergoing a paradigm change in terms of foreign policy and security and defence policy<sup>45</sup>.

This could be seen coming, actually. There are many South American states that have expressed concern at the political, economic and military rise of Brazil<sup>46</sup>. Examples include, of course, Venezuela, Colombia, Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay. I shall not go into detail about this in the present paper; it should be noted, however, that the concern is very much real, and that it is here to stay. It will be up to Brazil to allay such understandable fears, which the objectives I have mentioned refer to and current practices enhance. Not too much is worth saying about the differences between the theoretical-discursive aspects and the political “kinetic” practices, unless we do so to stress, like George Friedman did in a different context with regard to the tensions between Iran and the United States, that “from a purely rhetorical point of view, it is not always easy to tell which sides’ politicians are more colourful”<sup>47</sup>.

### On the ‘security properties’ of the new South Atlantic highlight

In order to present a successful overview of what I have been referring to, I shall look at the bigger picture in a more comprehensive way. It is true that the weight of the southern seas has decreased significantly, *mutatis mutandis*, as, like South America, Africa remained in the background of the outbreaks of change and modernization which have been redesigning the world since the post 1945. For decades on end the African continent was viewed – both internally and externally – as a passive victim of poverty, corruption, wars, and underdevelopment, and as a setting of natural and humanitarian disasters that often had terrible consequences.

The strategic importance of Africa, when it enjoyed it, was pegged to the geopolitical interests of *others*, namely of the Europeans; that was the case, for example, with the so-called scramble for Africa in the late nineteenth century.

This image is no longer enough – if it ever was – to portray ongoing processes. It is true that the centrality of Africa remains essentially geopolitical and that the interests it reacts to are still mostly *external*. In a general sense, the same could be said about South America. However, this somehow rather gloomy scenario of passivity and subordination is changing. Indeed, there are other ingredients in the “new scramble for Africa” and for South America, both in its northern part and in its southernmost extensions, that bring to the fore an unavoidable proactivity of some regional states in the relationship with the Great Powers (European and other, in a new “South-South” matrix and in an increasingly interdependent world) that interact with them<sup>48</sup>.

<sup>45</sup> For a general and precise introduction to the multiple roles and concerns of Brazil in this region, see the short study of Brazilian Vice Admiral Wilson Barbosa Guerra (2011). “O Brasil e a Segurança do Atlântico Sul”, *Nação e Defesa* 128: 67-77.

<sup>46</sup> See, for example, Paulo Gorjão (2010). “The repercussions of Brazil's increasing diplomatic assertiveness”, *ViewPoints*, IPRIS, October.

<sup>47</sup> In George Friedman (2012). “Considering a U.S.-Iranian Deal”, STRATFOR, 24 January, available at [http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/considering-us-iranian-deal?utm\\_source=freelist-f&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=20120124&utm\\_term=qweekly&utm\\_content=readmore&elq=8cd8f6b74314329975fc1d7ad2edf46](http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/considering-us-iranian-deal?utm_source=freelist-f&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=20120124&utm_term=qweekly&utm_content=readmore&elq=8cd8f6b74314329975fc1d7ad2edf46)

<sup>48</sup> Several studies have been carried out on recent qualitative changes in recent Brazilian foreign policy. See, for instance the interesting study by Paulo G. Fagundes Visentini (2009). “O Brasil e a Cooperação Sul-Sul no Pós-Guerra Fria. Políticas externas comparadas, relações bilaterais e multilaterais com as ‘potências





Generally, this progression of affairs has been analyzed in Portugal as a “classic” mode; but this will no longer do, as new international political players like the U.S. and China have become centrepieces for understanding regional political dynamics. Looking at African affairs, it has become a rule that these new external “agents” have joined continental ones, such as South Africa, Nigeria, Angola or Botswana (just to mention four of the many possible cases), in the range of players with the potential to play important roles in the global political arena. At multilateral level, the players are organizations such as the African Union and its Council for Peace and Security, and the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) with its supposedly innovative and effective peer-review mechanism.

Across the Southern Ocean the same could be said with regard to Brazil, the Venezuela-Colombia pair, or even small Uruguay, changing what can be altered, which often is. Of course this does not happen in a uniform manner. Due to various reasons associated with internal dynamics – including the cyclical and endemic crises of legitimacy that affect the elites in power, glaring domestic economic inequalities, and human and territorial insecurity political and military situations – the new continental players have not always been able to fulfil their designed potential. Examples include the Congo and Nigeria, on the Atlantic coast of Africa, and Colombia and Venezuela.

It is nowadays growingly clear that the role of South American and South African states is becoming more central in shaping their own place in the increasingly complex geopolitical and geostrategic framework where their own interests are embedded. Besides Brazil, huge South Africa and Nigeria, small Botswana and a rather big Angola surely have been acquiring an ever more central role. In addition to this, Brazil and Angola may not be the only Portuguese speaking countries to come to the limelight: Paul Lubeck, Michael J. Watts and Ronnie Lipschutz<sup>49</sup>, stress that the Pentagon’s strategy has been “to lie low and work through African institutions to train troops and strengthen security”; while John Pike –Director of GlobalSecurity.org – predicted that “the tiny island state of São Tomé and Príncipe will become the AFRICOM base. This island seems destined to be America’s unsinkable aircraft carrier in the Gulf of Guinea, much like Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean and Guam in the Pacific. Additional strategic advantages of STP are: its isolation from the mainland, location within the Nigerian sphere of influence, and richness of oil and natural gas deposits within its territorial waters. Securing Nigerian energy resources will be, of course, a major strategic goal of the new AFRICOM command”<sup>50</sup>. Despite the formal location of the

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emergentes”, Núcleo de Estratégia e Relações Internacionais – NERINT (Centre for Strategic and International Relations) of the *Instituto Latino-Americano de Estudos Avançados* –ILEA (Latin American Institute for Advanced Studies) of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), with the support of the Alexandre de Gusmão Foundation (FUNAG). With regard to the regional impact of those changes in the foreign policy of Brazil, it is useful to check the article by André Luiz Reis da Silva (2009). “A América do Sul na política externa do Governo Fernando Henrique Cardoso, um legado para o Governo Lula?”, equally published by NERINT. Concerning the development of foreign policy for Africa by Itamaraty, the work of Paulo G. Fagundes Visentini and Analúcia Danilevich Pereira (2009). “A política africana do governo Lula”, published by NERINT is very useful.

<sup>49</sup> Paul Lubeck M., Michael J. Watts and Ronnie Lipschutz (2007). *Convergent Interests. US energy security and the 'securing' of Nigerian democracy*: p.2, International Policy Report, Center for International Security.

<sup>50</sup> The objective of this Central Command remains, however, less clear than the others that make up the U.S. quadrangle in the world since the end of World War II: “testifying before the Senate Armed Services Committee in 2005, EUCOM’s then-commander, General James Jones, emphasized that his command’s “objective in Africa should be to eliminate ungoverned areas, to counter extremism, and to end conflict and reduce chronic instability” because of Africa’s “potential to become the next front in the Global War on Terrorism”<sup>50</sup>. However, it must be noted that the respected International Crisis Group (ICG) “expressed



command in Stuttgart, Baden-Württemberg, Germany, the regular inflows of U.S. military that over the past six years have been travelling to and from the archipelago may well prove him right.

Are we then now capable of a first assessment? The absence of a robust and consensual security framework may have serious implications. But this will not happen now, and it seems unlikely that it will emerge in a linear way. In any case, the absence of a simple security framework in a South Atlantic with a growing multidimensional importance is seriously felt today in the form of small facts and incidents which otherwise might appear to be individual and unconnected issues. However, they are not, and it is worth listing a few: In May 2010, the turbulent Julius Mulema, the young president of YLANC, the "Youth League" of the African National Congress of South Africa – the ruling party – was accused by his own party as a result of the contacts he maintained with President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela "without authority from above"<sup>51</sup>, and, more recently in late 2011 and early 2012, he suffered serious disciplinary action ordered by President Zuma; the same Hugo Chavez who, in early April 2008, officially proposed to President Lula da Silva the joint creation and leadership of a South Atlantic Treaty Organization (which he called SATO), as "opposed" to "North American" NATO<sup>52</sup>; a 2010 confidential report on coastal security in Namibia, Angola, and the two Congo – an area extending over several thousands of kilometres, full of numerous resources such as diamonds, oil, and several ores – produced under the aegis of a Nordic State, parts of which I had access to, regrets the fact that there were just between one hundred and fifty to two hundred man (Angolan *ninjas*, as they are called) with just a couple of Korean frigates; the report states that the situation in the Niger Delta remains chaotic, and that a rekindle of tensions between the United Kingdom and Argentina with regard to the Falkland/Malvinas Island is ongoing<sup>53</sup>.

There are many more individual facts and events like these... What in many cases turns out to be less of a one-off episode is the growing perception, often increasingly agonistic in tone, that security threats have triggered structured and precise reactions, at least among regional and global players more aware of this "baptism". Again, a few examples: the vast archipelago of Cape Verde, which is a very clear choke point, has long been *effectively* seen as a "door", a "lock" or the "bottle neck" that can enable – or prevent – the connection between the North Atlantic and the South. Today it is more than ever. The same was implicitly recognized by Solomon Passy, at the time Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria and later, in 2009, candidate to the post of Secretary-General of NATO – when in 2005 he formally proposed the inclusion of Cape Verde in the Atlantic Alliance; although this was not accepted – among other member states of the organization, Greece objected to it – some states, including Portugal, made a semi-

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deep skepticism about the contention that the Sahara and Sahel are terrorist 'swamps' that must be drained by the Americans and their local allies". What, in any case, is clear is that the US does not wish to irritate the locals by ostensibly reinforcing its political and military presence, which has been increasing in the region.

<sup>51</sup> In this regard see, via Google, the article titled "Youth league president remains defiant on nationalization of South African mines", which is shown in dozens of publications. See also the most recent articles (2012) concerning the suspension of Mulema decreed by President Zuma.

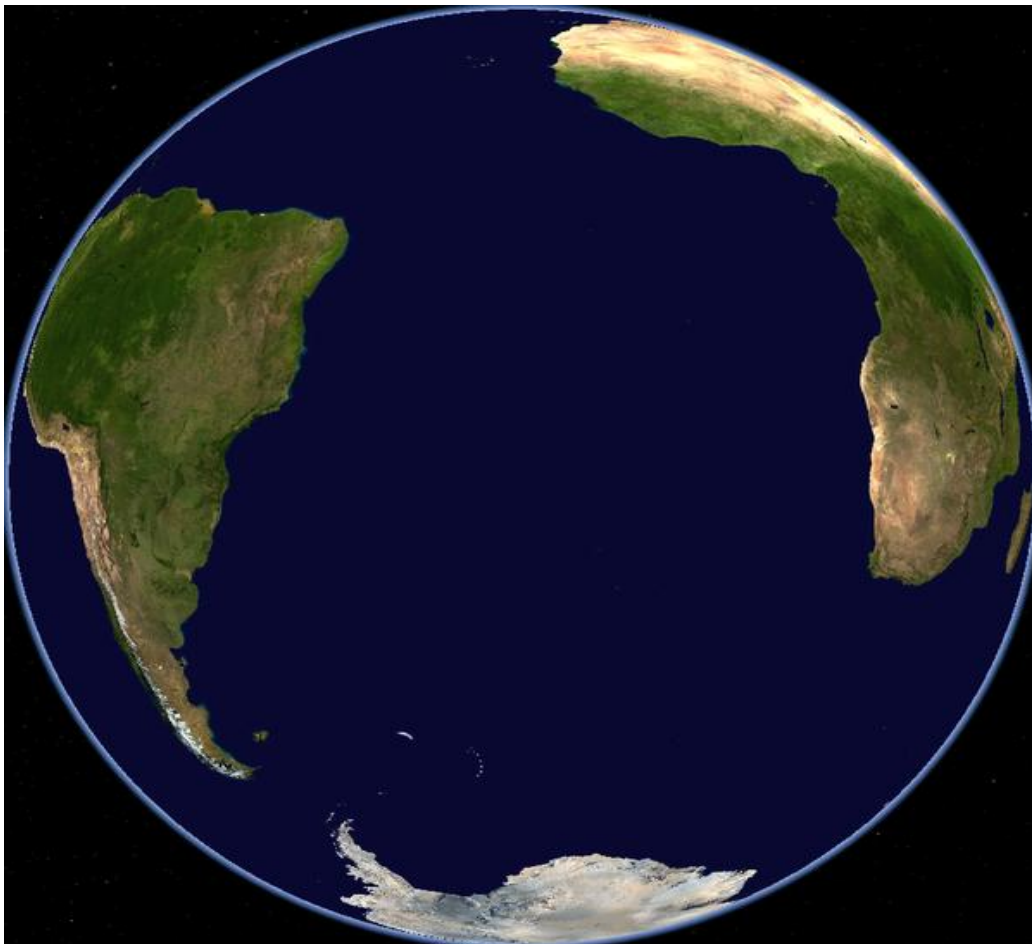
<sup>52</sup> See the article titled "Venezuela and Brazil can create a South Atlantic Treaty Organization" in the Portuguese edition of the famous newspaper *Pravda*, from 14 April 2008, available at <http://port.pravda.ru/mundo/22354-criar-0>

<sup>53</sup> It is worth reading the remarkable maps of what is in dispute, executed by the International Boundary Research Unit of the University of Durham, United Kingdom, available at [http://www.dur.ac.uk/ibru/resources/south\\_atlantic/](http://www.dur.ac.uk/ibru/resources/south_atlantic/)



formal coalition and made the “Declaration of Lanzarote” on 13 June 2009, which was signed with the purpose of outlining a soft security architecture (facing organized crime, health, and the environment) for the South Atlantic area that extends to the south of the allied jurisdictional space<sup>54</sup>. This is attested, albeit episodically, by NATO’s decision to carry out the Operation Steadfast Jaguar in the archipelago between 15 and 28 June 2006, which were the first military exercises in the “African Continent”<sup>55</sup>. The same applies to the ones that followed, although this is not part of the new Strategic Concept of the Alliance<sup>56</sup>.

**Figure 4 - The vast South Atlantic, as seen by Google Earth**



### **NATO and the SATO: a succession of avatars in the search for a new regional security architecture**

For the sake of hindsight, let us quickly examine the genealogy or pedigree of the matter – a useful analytical move, as this was not the first time that the Atlantic

<sup>54</sup> It was an initiative of Spain and Portugal involving over ten countries on both sides of the Atlantic, designed merely to increase collaboration between the two sides of the ocean in areas such as immigration, poverty alleviation or environmental protection.

<sup>55</sup> For NATO’s official press release on the operation, unfortunately not very detailed, see [http://www.nato.int/shape/issues/shape\\_nrf/sfig06/pressrel.htm](http://www.nato.int/shape/issues/shape_nrf/sfig06/pressrel.htm)

<sup>56</sup> Something I shall not address here, but which enables another article to complement the present one.



Alliance turned its eyes to the south, nor the first time the idea of a SATO was advanced. It is useful to look at the historical and institutional background, even if referring to another time and international order – the bipolar and Cold War period. The genealogy of attempts to make NATO act “out of the area” *avant la lettre* is both extremely complex and interesting for what it reveals of the internal correlation of powers within the Alliance. A couple of examples will suffice: after having considered that “resistance to direct or indirect aggression in any part of the world is an essential contribution to the common security of the free world,” thus expressing its support for French military action in the region<sup>57</sup> in a resolution in December 1952 – at the request of France, which was committed to maintaining its Southeast Asian possessions, ten years later the North Atlantic Council continued to support, albeit nominally, France’s efforts in Algeria. However, when the Portuguese government requested something similar in relation to its African colonies, this was refused<sup>58</sup>; some states are obviously more important than others...

More was to follow: quoting John Chipman in 1987, “in the mid-1970s, concern centred for some time on problems in South Africa. Fears of the putative Soviet campaign of ‘total onslaught’ in southern Africa led to worries that strategic materials located there would be lost to the West or that the Cape route might be effectively controlled by the Soviet Union. Inevitably, there were a few who felt that NATO should act to prevent this from happening, or should at least be prepared to protect its interests. Speculation that NATO developed extensive plans with South Africa”. The insistence came, in the now distant 1970s, from the apartheid regime in power in the Union of South Africa, but it did not work out: “while some studies were done in the 1970s by Allied Command Atlantic on the defence of South Atlantic shipping and other contingencies south of the Tropic of Cancer, it never received a license to plan operations”<sup>59</sup>.

South Africa’s ambition was to build a “kind of SATO” involving both Africa from Cape Horn to Latin America, which ended in resounding failure for a “West” that was understandably hesitant before the Pretoria regime. Hindsight gives us a glimpse of what was at stake from the perspective of South Africa; as John Chipman pointed out, in 1987 the actors were of a different generation and they lived in a very distinct international situation: “South Africa’s attempts to develop a South Atlantic Treaty Organization must be seen in the light that leaders in South Africa have consistently argued that Soviet naval activities in the South Atlantic might turn the area into a ‘communist lake’ and sought to enlist other governments into a loose military organization in order to protect ‘Western interests’ in the area. In the late 1970s and

<sup>57</sup> These were the terms of a Resolution of the North Atlantic Assembly Ministerial Meeting agreed in Paris at a meeting held between 15 and 18 December 1952.

<sup>58</sup> John Chipman (1987). “NATO and out of area insecurity”, *Estratégia*, n. 3, Instituto de Estudos Estratégicos e Internacionais, no. 3, Lisbon. According to John Chipman, then Deputy Director of the Regional Security of ISS, in London, “in October 1968 at a NATO meeting in Lisbon, the Portuguese Foreign Minister argued that ‘the NATO Alliance should not be indifferent to the preservation for the West of vital strategic positions. We have never understood, for example, how one can separate the North Atlantic from the South Atlantic or how one can ensure the security of one without taking into account the security of the other’. The Portuguese government even offered NATO use of its bases in Africa in order to assist in the protection of the Cape route, but this offer was not taken up by other member states, which were more concerned that Portuguese policy in Africa could lead to a smooth transition to independence for its African possessions”. The Portuguese claim was not met. The minister was, obviously, Franco Nogueira, quoted in Christopher Coker (1985). *NATO, the Warsaw Pact and Africa*: 54, RUSI Defence Studies Series, MacMillan.

<sup>59</sup> Johan Jorgen Holst (1986). “NATO and the Wider World: Strategic Interests and Domestic Constraints”, *NUPINotat*, August, p. 6.



early 1980s, various Argentinean officials seemed to openly support the idea of a South Atlantic defence pact. Other countries in the region were less enthusiastic. The statement made by the Foreign Minister of Brazil in September 1976 to the effect that 'there is not the slightest possibility of establishing a collective security system in the South Atlantic, especially with the awkward and unwanted presence of South Africa, 'is perhaps typical of that country's approach'<sup>60</sup>. In the early months of the Reagan Administration, there were some fleeting references by American officials visiting South American countries on the desirability of greater military collaboration among South Atlantic powers, but the difficulty in bringing the relevant parties together meant that the idea was never carried very far<sup>61</sup>. Indeed, "while some studies were done in the 1970s by the Allied Atlantic Command on the defence of South Atlantic shipping and other contingencies south of the Tropic of Cancer, it never received a license to plan operations"<sup>62</sup>. Even at the level of the gap (or, perhaps better, the slot) that connects and separates the discourses and the actual practices that have been carried out, it seems clear that differen subgroups involved did not then (as, of course, they do not now) see eye to eye.

It is true that the bipolar world of the cold warriors is dead and that now the rules of the game have changed. However, I believe that the new conventional wisdom has had smaller eyes and a bigger belly than what would have been appropriate. There are macro moves which run in parallel; and surely more serious, although less easy to consider, is the establishing of increasingly closer ties between Hugo Chavez and the Russian President Dmitri Medvedev and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad from Iran. The same goes for the direct and indirect support the latter received from the then Brazilian President Lula (and later from President Dilma Rousseff) regarding Persia's nuclear aspirations. In a curious political and diplomatic

*coup de théâtre*, a few weeks before Brazil, as non-permanent member of the Security Council of the United Nations, voted against the extension of sanctions on Iran, Hans Rühle, a former Director-General for Defence Policy of the German Federal Ministry of Defence, published in the many senses official *Internationale Politik*, of the German

<sup>60</sup> The Minister was António Francisco Azeredo da Silveira, quoted in Andrew Hurrell (1983), "The Politics of South Atlantic Security; A Survey of Proposals for a South Atlantic Treaty Organisation", *International Affairs*, vol. 59, no. 2, Spring, p. 187.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid*, p. 191.

<sup>62</sup> Johan Jorgen Holst, *op. cit.*: 6. It must be noted that this was not a mere hesitation of the Atlantic Alliance in the face of a South Africa in loss of international legitimacy: even when it came from other circles, the idea of an institutionalized and coherent regional architecture for the South Atlantic never had much weight, despite increasing problems, or perhaps precisely because of them; "the Falklands war sufficiently complicated the strategic situation in the region to put an end to whatever hopes some might have entertained for the establishment of a South Atlantic security system. Even if a few admirals steeped into Mahanite thinking have occasionally suggested the importance of politically and operationally uniting the North Atlantic and South Atlantic's 'strategic spaces', these ideas have never held any currency in NATO or in national alliance defence establishments". To a certain extent, the problem was 'conceptual'. As John Chipman affirmed, "the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) is committed to the defence of a certain region, yet that region has no special geographical meaning and exists only by virtue of the definition given to it in the treaty text. Though the contracting parties agree that the whole region is to be defended, in practice, planning takes place largely for the defence of Western Europe; there are no specific plans for what Europeans might do to bolster American territorial security. These two facts make it difficult to speak of NATO as a regional alliance in the strict sense of the term: no map clearly identifies the North Atlantic area, and security for the part of the area that does make geographic sense (Western Europe), largely guaranteed by an Alliance partner (the United States) whose homeland lies outside it. It is small wonder, therefore, that there should be doubts about how the Alliance should deal with threats that stem from outside the area". To a large extent, resistance was political and structural in nature, and endogenous to the organization, immediately putting in evidence a limitation that was intrinsic to it with regard to the willingness of member states to cooperate beyond the minimum that they had to.





Council for Foreign Relations, a remarkable article titled "Brazil and the Bomb. Vexing nuclear activities in South America", detailing Brazil's many secret nuclear activities, and indicating that the country was also emptying the contents of the already fragile Non-Proliferation Treaties<sup>63</sup>. It is true that the Brazilian President has since then retreated her steps, moderated her discourse, replaced Nelson Jobim, and distanced herself from Iran and its nuclear aspirations.

But all evidence indicates that the absence of a consensual and robust security architecture for the South Atlantic is becoming very dangerous in the high stakes it originates.

### **What might all this mean for Portugal and for the future of 'lusophony'?**

I shall finish with what I consider to be some educated guesswork with respect to the potential implications for Portuguese and "lusophone" interests brought about by this new state of affairs – the absence of robust security frameworks for a region in turmoil and the obvious need for the eventual emergence of a new security architecture for a seething South Atlantic. I started by focusing on South America, turning then to southern Africa. However, right from the outset, I want to emphasize the enormous weight of "Lusophony" in the South Atlantic as I defined it.

I shall begin by pulling together some of the strands of what I stated earlier: out of the existing eight Portuguese speaking countries, five (Brazil, Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau and São Tomé and Príncipe) are located there; three of them, perhaps four (all, except Cape Verde) have oil and vast additional resources. The main language of this huge basin is Portuguese, and it is in this political universe that the bulk of economic growth and development have taken place in this resurgent region. In my final thoughts, I would like to draw limits to what I find possible, and to outline potentialities. Somehow populating it with details, I touch on issues I have alluded to already, such as the creation of a U.S. command centre for Africa, AFRICOM; the rebirth of the U.S. Fourth Fleet, almost 60 years after its dissolution in 1950, with all its implications; the crescendo in joint military exercises; China's race to both coasts of the South Atlantic; Russia and its approximation to Bolivarianism; and even, as we shall see, the hypothetical "reconnection", through the export of revolutionary and insurgent models from Latin America to Africa, and the eventual centrality, in this framework, of the North-South island geography that is so characteristic of these southern seas, which, as we have seen, have been put into a kind of temporary virtual coma since the end of the pre-industrial Atlantic triangular trade. What are the implications of this for Portugal?

Without any ambition to offer anything even close to a definitive answer, it seems to me important to pose a question which may begin the process of shaping that answer. What is the impact of this deregulation and of this re-positioning for the future of a

<sup>63</sup> The article can easily be found at [www.ip-global.org](http://www.ip-global.org). A simplified version published a few days before the voting in New York has been republished many times, as shown by simple search. For some historical background, the following is important: Ricardo Medeiros de Castro (2006). *Reinterpretando a cooperação nuclear entre Brasil e Argentina: as diversas nuances e perspectivas de relacionamento no contexto mundial*, Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre, Master Degree dissertation. For a good historical background written by a Yale Professor, see Jean Krasno (1994), "Non-proliferation: Brazil's secret nuclear program", ORBIS.



'lusophony' that, if built, will inevitably have its centre of gravity in the South Atlantic? Simplicity should be ruled out from the very beginning: it is not easy to suggest a plausible response, much less a solution, to this quandary. In any case, it seems that the possibility of any Portuguese-speaking state leading, by itself, that apparently much coveted entity, is to be excluded: none has the clout, or the heft, to do so. Also, it is not obvious either that Brazil or Angola, both to be sure undergoing vigorous growth, will consider any supra-national or intergovernmental construct as less detrimental to their strict and narrow national interests.

The US Administration, for its part, does not seem inclined to allow a security deregulation in an area that is increasingly vital to its own interests. In an ideal world, the solution would surely be the alignment of Lusophone countries from the North and South Atlantic with a meta-regional project that only the United States would be in a position to lead. The fact may or may not please us, depending on our political stance and according to our national interests; it is a pure and simple evidence whose implications we should take in. It may be less plausible for the Americans to abandon the deployment of forces to the south that they have been conducting – in a kind of new corollary of the Monroe Doctrine – than for Brazil to be capable, from a logistic and military point of view, in timely fashion and with the necessary robustness, to attend to the security tremors that are expected and which, unfortunately, have been increasing, along the extensive, complex and turbulent African coast on the other side of the ocean.

Even in an optimal scenario, 'Lusophony' is, in other words, increasingly more captive of a *Mare Nostrum* where – should one be minimally realistic, as we of course must – we cannot but play second fiddle<sup>64</sup>. Portugal may, indeed, take some advantage of the various organizations and *fora* it is part of, being a member of NATO, the EU and the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP). It has a "strategic partnership" with China, embodied in the "Macao Forum", and, albeit with less autonomy, it can benefit from the Ibero-American Summits in which it participates. The same applies to its counterparts, namely Brazil and Angola, in the *fora* where they also participate. Cape Verde and São Tomé and Príncipe (and Guinea-Bissau, although in a different league) may also take advantage of their position as choke points and areas of some strategic importance. However, we cannot expect much more than that: multilateral posturing. Indeed, the question is not whether 'lusophony' can erect a stable architecture of security in the South Atlantic. Rather, the real issue is one of how not to be left out of the security architecture which will inevitably be built by others – and thus avoid becoming mere passive observers of an ongoing and unstoppable process.

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<sup>64</sup> For an alternative view, it is useful to read the interview titled "Um clube lusófono" de segurança", in which General Loureiro dos Santos, a Portuguese, argued before journalist Luísa Meireles, on 28 March 2009, the feasibility of such an entity bringing together Brazil, Angola and Portugal; at <http://aeiou.expresso.pt/loureiro-dos-santos-quer-clube-lusofono-de-seguranca=f505869>. Interestingly, the idea no longer appears in a later article by José Alberto Loureiro dos Santos (2011), "Uma Visão Portuguesa da Segurança no AtlânticoSul", *Nação e Defesa*, 128: 19-29.



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