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Brazil and the NATO: is Cooperation Possible?

Williams Gonçalves

The theme of this paper is the possibility of cooperation between Brazil and the NATO. What motivates it is the bewilderment encountered among numerous scholars and diplomats from Europe and the United States in the face of Brazilian diplomacy´s unwillingness to take part in such cooperation. They find the fact odd and unnatural that Brazil should take a stand similar to that of Russia and China in regards to NATO military actions that fall outside the perimeters for which it was originally conceived. The aim of this text is to examine the issue, and by doing so, in some way contribute to its clarification.

The Evolution of the NATO

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is an entity created in April 1949, in Washington. Twelve countries initially signed the Treaty. In the course of time, new member countries joined. With the breakup of the Soviet bloc, Eastern European countries that were once part of the now defunct Warsaw Pact also joined the Organization. Today, the NATO brings together 28 member countries, as well as 22 partner countries, with which it maintains cooperative relations at the bilateral level.

Article 5 of the Treaty (usually termed musketeer clause), forms the backbone of the military alliance:

The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all

and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence recognised by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.

Since the Treaty was signed, Article 5 has been interpreted in light of new international political and strategic circumstances. From then on, member Parties define NATO's Strategic Concept. The Strategic Concept identifies trends in the international system of power and threats facing member States, and establishes lines of action that will govern the behaviour of the organization to ensure compliance with the security objectives of all signatories to the treaty. Defining the Strategic Concept always implies intense political negotiations, because what is in play is not just the outlining of challenges and threats facing the Alliance countries, but also the extent to which these outlines can affect the interests of each individual member and of course the increased costs that a new concept inevitably leads to.

The NATO presents a response to the crisis caused by the Soviet´s blockage of access to Berlin in 1948. The rise to power of the Chinese Communists in 1949 together with North Korea´s military invasion of South Korea in early 1950 served to curb any resistance that still existed in Europe (in relation to an overt political and military United States presence) and to strengthen the argument of the necessity of a military structure to defend the western part of the continent. Thus, the Strategic Concept formulated in 1949 (DC 6/1) was invigorated in 1952 at the Lisbon Summit with a new concept (MC 3/5) indicating that the biggest threat was the Soviet power´s desire for expansion. The NATO, at the same time, proceeded with its first expansion of the organization´s perimeter with the integration of Greece and Turkey.

From 1949 until today, the Strategic Concept underwent six reformulations - MC 3/5 (1952), MC 14/2 (1957), MC 14/3 (1968), the New Strategic Concept of the Alliance (1991), the Strategic Concept Alliance (1999) and, finally, the Strategic Concept (2010). According to the organization, these different Strategic Concepts should be included into three distinct periods: Cold War period; immediate post-Cold War period; and secure environment period since September 11, 2001[1].

The New Strategic Concept drafted in 1991 meant the most profound change the NATO yet faced. Irrespective of the fact of the Soviet Union harbouring or not plans of expanding communism into Western Europe by means of Warsaw Pact troops, the mere existence of the Soviet state and its military alliance with the countries of Eastern Europe under its influence were already reasons considered more than enough to justify the NATO´s nuclear military apparatus. Therefore, the dissolution of the Soviet bloc and the Soviet state itself threw the NATO into an existential crisis. Finally, hereafter, what should be the mission of the military alliance? Should it continue financing this costly military machine of the alliance without the existence of the enemy which led to its creation?

[1] http: www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_56626.htm

The Americans proved to be the most concerned about the future of the organization. The question however was resolved much more easily than they had envisioned. The feared hypothesis being that the Europeans would take the opportunity to rid themselves from the protection of the United States to pursue purely national objectives proved unfounded. On the contrary—precisely because of concern about the possibility of rekindling the flame of nationalism— Europeans were the first to defend maintaining the military organization, to ensure the permanence of the United States in leading the continent´s defence system. In the London Declaration of June 1990, the NATO announced to realize changes necessary to maintain the alliance.

This decision naturally meant an important reformulation of the Strategic Concept. The document approved at the Rome Summit in November 1991, dismissed the confrontational feature that until then had been characteristic, and instead sought to honour the commitment of collective defence by establishing partnerships and cooperation with former adversaries, while at the same time they "pledged to reduce the use of nuclear power to a minimum, just enough to preserve peace and stability"[2]. The idea of expanding the alliance to include former adversaries revealed that the focus had changed, and that its maintenance no longer served threats of a military nature, but rather indistinct threats.

At the time of the Washington Summit in April 1999 when the organization´s fiftieth anniversary was celebrated, the Strategic Concept underwent further change. To a large extent it took place in the light of the experience gained in the Balkan conflicts. The change resulted in strengthening the guidelines that had been introduced in 1991. Under the subheading "Risks and Challenges to Security", in paragraph 20, the document specifies the risks that were provided for at this time:

The security of the Alliance remains subject to a wide variety of military and non-military risks which are multi-directional and often difficult to predict. These risks include uncertainty and instability in and around the Euro-Atlantic area and the possibility of regional crises at the periphery of the Alliance, which could evolve rapidly. Some countries in and around the Euro-Atlantic area face serious economic, social and political difficulties. Ethnic and religious rivalries, territorial disputes, inadequate or failed efforts at reform, the abuse of human rights, and the dissolution of states can lead to local and even regional instability. The resulting tensions could lead to crises affecting Euro-Atlantic stability, to human suffering, and to armed conflicts. Such conflicts could affect the security of the Alliance by spilling over into neighbouring countries, including NATO countries, or in other ways, and could also affect the security of other states[3].

In addition to these security risks, the Strategic Concept also mentions problems related to the existence of nuclear stockpiles, global proliferation of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, and broad circulation of high-tech weaponry.

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[2]   Ibidem

[3]   http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-065e.htm

The fact that the document no longer refers to the security of NATO territory should be considered as very significant. Through this Strategic Concept, the area covered by the NATO becomes an imprecise region "in and around the Euro-Atlantic area." With the integration of several new members, the Alliance considers itself free to act in an indeterminate area, which it considers to be its responsibility. To act, it should be emphasized, is not to defend itself, but, "to manage crises," as is explained in other parts of the document.

The new NATO Strategic Concept "NATO'S Strategic Concept - Active Engagement, Modern Defence" was presented at the Summit of Heads of State and Government on 19-20 November 2010 in Lisbon. The document consists of 11 pages and 38 articles, the result of negotiations initiated in 2004 in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11 and the increasing NATO involvement in Afghanistan[4]. As set out in its Article 21, the Concept was developed in light the of experience gained by the organization in Afghanistan and the Balkans.

The new Concept not only broadens the organization's participation, but also its objectives. In this sense, it consolidates the direction described in the two previous papers of 1991 and 1999, both impacted by the end of the Cold War. In it, beyond the original goal of ensuring the "collective defence", are presented two more goals, practically placed on equal footing with the former: "crisis management" and "cooperative security". The "collective defence" represents a commitment to Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. By "crisis management", it refers to the intervention of NATO armed forces where there are crises which may threaten the safety of members of the Organization. With "cooperative security", it is referring to cooperation with countries outside the Organization, to increase or ensure their safety, establishing bilateral agreements with the NATO.

The Concept of Lisbon establishes that a conventional military attack on NATO members is a long shot. However, it justifies the increase in the number of its members and expansion of the scope of its actions due to the existence of other threats to security. The most significant threats include: proliferation of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction; terrorist groups; trafficking of arms, narcotics and humans; cyber attacks; threats to channels of communication and transportation; development of sensitive technologies such as laser weaponry; electronic warfare and technologies that impede access to space; denial of the environment and resources, including health risks, climate change, water scarcity and increased demand for energy resources.

It is interesting to note that the NATO reserves nuclear primacy for itself. Although stipulating nuclear non-proliferation as one of its main objectives, the Alliance considers that it should be able to undertake such a task by virtue of its own nuclear capability. As far as the NATO is concerned, as long as there are nuclear arsenals outside the Alliance and the possibility of other countries and organizations acquiring them, it is of fundamental importance for the security of all that the NATO retains its arsenal.

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4   NATO'S Strategic Concept – Active Engagement, Modern Defence. In: RINGSMOSE, Jens, RYNNING, Sten. Nato's New Strategic Concept: A Comprehensive Assessment. Copenhagen, DIIS – Danish Institute for International Studies, 2011. Pg. 175-186.

This discussion about nuclear arsenal directly concerns the relationship between the NATO and Russia. Russia is, so to speak, a separate chapter of the NATO´s external relations. In 1997, through the NATO-Russia Founding Act, the NATO and Russia opened a forum for consultation and cooperation called Permanent Joint Council (PJC). During the Kosovo crisis in 1999, when the NATO bombed Serbia, Russia decided to break off relations with the PJC. Relations were, however, restored in 2002, at the Rome Summit; Russian President Putin participated in the meeting and the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) was formed. In August 2008, due to war between Russia and Georgia, the NATO this time decided to suspend meetings and cooperation in some areas of mutual interest. In 2009, dialogue finally resumed.

Despite the end of the Cold War, NATO-Russia relations are marked by ongoing mutual mistrust. The United States and the most important West European countries stick to the idea of establishing good relations with Russia, but the NATO countries from the former Soviet bloc, such as the Baltic republics, Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic believe that this is not possible. The very fact that the NATO has already expanded eastward to include these countries puts Russia on guard. So far, the idea of having relations based on dialogue and cooperation with Russia does not appear compatible with the idea of the NATO´s expansion to Russia´s borders. This is evident in the attempt carried out by the NATO in 2008 to integrate Georgia, which was immediately met by Russia with war and the recognition of the independence of South Ossetia. Even among sectors in Russia that oppose President Vladimir Putin, the NATO´s integration of Georgia and Ukraine "could make [Russia] inadmissibly vulnerable from the standpoint of military security and could spark a split and conflict inside Ukraine"[5].

The Evolution of International Politics

The Bush administration's foreign policy following the terrorist attacks of 09/11 almost ended the period known as post-Cold War. The prospects raised by Bill Clinton's Democrat administration of a form of globalization lead by the United States, on the basis of free trade and liberal democratic regimes, and long-term NGO activity in the area of new international issues, forming a so-called global governance, was thwarted. Predisposed from the beginning of his mandate to steer foreign policy in a different direction, Bush took the terrorist attacks as a pretext to manoeuvre a turning point in U.S. foreign policy. His neoconservative aides, who long awaited the opportunity to put their ideas into practice, used the shock from the attacks to initiate a formidable change in direction in foreign policy—replacing multilateralism and diplomatic negotiation with unilateralism and brute force. Within only a short time in government, of the type of globalization previously conceived by liberals from the Clinton era, only economic and financial globalization survived, which has worked against, rather than benefited the United States.

The result of this policy has been largely negative for the United States. The privileged position it had acquired in the immediate post-Cold War period was now squandered.

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[5] KARAGANOV, Sergey. Security Strategy: Why Arms? In: http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/pubcol/Security-Atrategy-Why-Arms-15716 (26/10/2012)

The leaders who supported Bush in the military adventure in Iraq lost prestige and offices because the war which began under false premises was unjustifiably prolonged and the objective of reshaping the Middle East policy was not achieved. Bush ended his mandate, discredited internally without getting his Republican Party successor elected. In addition, he left a legacy of enormous public debt and a very grave economic crisis for Barack Obama.

Even with all the raised expectations that surrounded his new government, Barack Obama has not broken any new ground in foreign policy, despite announcing efforts to maintain the United States as the "the one indispensable nation" for the world. Cornered on the home front by the difficulty of reversing the country's economic crisis, Obama has sought to manage the deadlock of a military presence in Afghanistan and Iraq, while at the same time he was virtually delegating the task of supporting and directly intervening militarily in areas of strategic interest to the United States to the NATO and faithful allies in the region. So it happened in Libya and so it has been in Syria. Perhaps for fear of negative repercussions in his campaign for re-election, perhaps for concern for the state budget deficit, perhaps also for concern for the reaction of China and Russia, Obama, despite the solid domestic political consensus, has resisted pressure from Israel to unleash a military strike on Iran, whose purpose would be to destroy its nuclear energy development program.

On the other hand, due to the U.S. economic crisis and its own internal imbalances, the European Union plunged into deep crisis. Sometimes governed by centre-right parties, sometimes by centre-left parties; always maintaining the basic principles of liberal economic policy, following the frame of reference set by the OECD countries—Europe now faced the same economic fate as the U.S. In this sense, the adoption of orthodox liberal economic measures has exposed the great inequalities between countries in the bloc. On one hand, Germany, which by managing to remain economically stable, took the lead in the bloc and has been determining monetary policy to sustain the euro. On other hand, the weaker countries which fail to get their economies to hum to the same tune (fiscally-speaking) as the most developed, or simply due to poor management, have found themselves in a critical spiral that is testing their respective political skills to guarantee the continuation of the social standards, as is the case of Greece, Spain, Portugal and Italy.

Concurrent to this picture of difficulty and crisis in the United States and Europe is the formidable economic growth in China, which has stimulated development in peripheral countries, especially in large exporting countries of strategically important commodities, such as food, minerals and oil. Executing an extensive program of installation of physical infrastructure, involving colossal sales and purchases, China has come to occupy a central position in the international economy, becoming the most influential country in the world. Due to price rises in commodities—determined by strong demand—many countries have been able to overcome chronic debt problems and thus better tackle persistent economic and social problems. Having joined the WTO and transforming itself into the great triumph of the globalization process, China has attracted companies from around the world to its large market that undertake investments to seek tax, foreign exchange, and wage concessions, in most cases, in exchange for technology.

Decisions to promote economic openness to private investment, from 1978, and partici-pate fully in the process of globalization, starting from 1994[6], resulted in the current inclusion of China in the international system. New economic needs led Chinese lead-ers to engage in dialogue more intensely with the major powers leaders, as well as to strengthen ties with peripheral countries. Anchored in the idea of a peaceful rise, and subsequently, peaceful development[7], the Chinese have endeavoured to resign from the idea that the country's economic growth is tied to the politics of challenging the inter-national standing of the United States, on taking the place of the hegemonic power. This new turn, however, would not leave China indifferent to international order. Besides oc-cupying a central position in the international political order as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, China now has direct interests in relations with countries on all continents as well as in global issues. Reinstating the role of the Confucian philoso-phy as a cornerstone of the country's culture, reclaiming and reworking the concept of "the harmonious world"[8], the Chinese have introduced a new way in relations between major economic powers and countries with developing or even incipient economies, that is: non-interference in internal affairs of those countries in which investments or volu-minous purchases of raw materials are made. Please note that such conduct differs to that of what all other powers have done traditionally, i.e. imposing political conditions on weaker countries according to their specific interests.

The new status of China in the international system not only has strengthened old polit-ical ties, but also created new ones. However, the political alliance with Brazil, Russia, India and South Africa is one that has had the greatest impact in the international sys-tem, given that these states together have worked together to amend the international order.

The BRICS Effect

In the 1990s, the idea that the end of the Cold War would open up space for the emer-gence of so called países baleia[9] began to take shape. In view of the homogeneity of the international economic system, it was envisaged that countries with major territorial areas, large populations and extensive and diverse natural resources—Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa and Indonesia—would be the main factors of mobility in the international system[10]. In 2001 this idea shifted from the centres of strategic studies into the offices of international economic and financial agents. Responsible for the trans-mission was chief economist for the global economy of the financial group Goldman Sachs, Jim O'Neil, writing the paper titled "Building Better Global Economic BRICs". In his thesis, O'Neil states that due to market size and growth rate, Brazil, Russia, India

[6] Ver: MARTI, Michael E. A China de Deng Xiaoping – O homem que pôs a China na cena do século XXI. Rio de Janeiro, Nova Froneira, 2007; LAMPTON, David M. The Three Faces of Chinese Power – Might, Money, and Minds. Los Angeles, University of California Press, 2008.

[7] BERGSTEIN, C. Fred et alii. China's Rise – Challenges and opportunities. Washington, Peter G. Peterson Institute for International Economics/Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2006

[8] Ibidem

[9] "Países baleia" can be translated as "whale countries" and means countries of vast territorial areas and populations.

[10] SARDENBERG, Ronaldo M. Panorama Estratégico Brasileiro. In: Parcerias Estratégicas, Secretaria de Assuntos Estratégicos/ Centro de Estudos Estratégicos. Vol. 1, nº 1 (May 1996). Brasília: SAE/CEE, 1996. Pg. 216-234.

and China, by 2050, would become the dominant world economies. Validating predictions of the 1990s, and incorporating the acronym created by O'Neil, heads of state and government from Brazil, Russia, India and China gathered in the Russian city of Yekaterinburg in May 2008 and formalized the existence of the BRICs. In February 2011, South Africa also joined the group, which has since become BRICS.

The BRICS have held five summits. The fifth summit was held in March 2013 in the city of Durban, South Africa. BRICS is not and is not intended as an economic bloc. At the bilateral level, the countries that comprise it interact and cooperate with each other in all economic, political, social and cultural fields. BRICS rather is a political group that was established by virtue of similarities and shared visions about the evolution of the international system. The summit serves for the leaders of the five states to assess the international situation and to adjust their collective political action, with a view to improving mechanisms of global governance. Even though they are not forming an economic bloc, the collective political action has led the five to build closer relations and cooperate more intensively with each other in order to intervene more effectively at the global level. Dialogue between business people, academics, legal experts and social groups interested in effective action from BRICS countries has multiplied, which leads to greater internal legitimacy for each country and an even greater policy density for the group.

The political actions of BRICS countries have been felt widely. But it is its interventions in the fields of finance, commerce and health which raise and generate the most expectations and repercussions, especially at the G-20 and the IMF. That is, this comprehensive range of interventions fosters the deconcentration of world power. This culminates in a move towards democratization of international relations, because for the first time developing countries find themselves in a position capable of changing the international order[11].

Brazil – BRICS – The International Order

During the presidency of Lula da Silva, Brazilian foreign policy underwent a shift. Throughout the decade preceding his presidency, corresponding to neoliberal economic policy committed to privatizing, opening markets and deregulating the economy, the Brazilian foreign policy had been guided by entire submission to the international order. Even without any concessions granted in return—just mere obedience to the interests of the hegemonic power—diplomacy adheres to various international regimes. With the advent of the Lula government, foreign policy returned to its tradition of serving the economic and social development of the country. Without the limitations imposed from the Cold War, diplomacy sought not only to broaden and diversify economic and trade partnerships, but also to take a more active role in efforts to promote change in the standards governing international institutions.

In line with this new orientation several initiatives were taken. The first was to end negotiations initiated by the previous government to create the Free Trade Area of the

[11] www.itamaraty.gov.br - BRICS

Americas (FTAA). Realizing that this project would serve only to ensure complete U.S. hegemony in the Americas, negotiations were finally terminated. From then on, diplomacy went to work with a view to revitalizing Mercosur. Previously, Mercosur had been treated as a mere instrument for the promotion of trade among its members. Under the new perspective, Mercosur returned to its origins, presenting itself as a political tool for integration in all areas and for enhancing development. Besides advancing Mercosur, diplomacy worked to push forward the integration of the entire South American continent. Continuing the previous government's initiative to bring together all the continent's heads of states, the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) was created.

Relations with countries in Africa, which had been neglected by the previous government, were also revived. New embassies were opened, while at the same time an intensive program of technical, scientific and cultural cooperation has been initiated. Brazil also sought to reengage with the Portuguese-speaking African countries, which are members of the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP). In South Africa, there has also been a more intensive dialogue, promoting a link to India in the East. Together, India, Brazil and South Africa formed IBSA, which has emerged as a dynamic element of international cooperation with the Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

Under the program of foreign policy expansion, Brazil also sought closer ties with Middle Eastern countries. In 2005, the Summit of South American-Arab Countries (ASPA) was held, bringing together eleven South American and twenty-two Arab countries. Through the creation of ASPA, it has been possible to improve considerably economic ties with those countries in the Middle East, to enhance technical cooperation and also to become a political interlocutor, sensitive to issues relevant to the developing world. This sensitivity to regional problems derives largely from ethnic bonds, given that a significant number of Brazilians is of Arab descent.

Participation in the BRICS group is undoubtedly the most important policy initiative of Brazilian diplomacy in the context of new foreign policy. The alliance with Russia, India, China and South Africa relates to central issues of international order, on which Brazilian diplomacy has historically positioned itself with a critical attitude.

With regard to this group, one can say that the relationship between Brazil and China stands out for its truly structural character, because Brazil has shared with China a similar vision on international relations for a much longer time than with the others. The ceremony of the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1974 was an authentic political manifestation in favour of a new international order free of hegemonic powers. Since these relations were established, cooperation between the two countries has suffered from oscillations, passing through one period of discretion, during which liberal ideas were predominant in Brazil. During this period the prevailing idea was that attempts to try to change the international order would be counterproductive and that it was more sensible and productive to prioritize good relations with the United States. However, since 2003 Brazil and China have cultivated closer ties, hailed as strategic by the authorities of both countries. Thanks to strong economic ties, Brazil has experienced economic growth, benefitting from China's fantastic development.

Central among these issues relating to international order faced by the BRICS countries is that of state sovereignty. The principle of respect for state sovereignty is the cornerstone of the modern international system. At the same time, it is enshrined in Article 2, paragraph 1 of the UN Charter, which states: "the principle of sovereign equality for all its members." Nevertheless, this principle is respected by the major powers only in their relations among themselves. In the relationships with small nations, it is systematically disregarded by the major powers. This is a situation that repeats itself historically, ever since the concept was formulated and accepted by large states. For that reason, respect for the right to claim sovereignty has been more insistent and dramatic from small states. The most important Brazilian manifestation at the League of Nations, in 1907—as advised by Chancellor Baron of Rio Branco and executed by the jurist Ruy Barbosa—was the defence of the legal equality of states. The first political manifestation from peripheral countries happened at the Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung in 1955, which was also intended to call for respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, and the right of non-intervention and non-interference in internal affairs from other countries.

The multi-polar international system of power is a shift considered irreversible. And this new structure consequently leads to inevitable changes in the international order. Some of these changes are already taking place. Nevertheless, there is a debate about the content of this new order. Is there, in fact, a new order being created? Or is this change that we are witnessing merely for the purpose of accommodating the interests of emerging powers? The question is undeniably complex. But it is also a futile one, if we consider that the goal of the action of BRICS has been to ensure respect for the pillar of international order, which is respect for the sovereignty of States. That is, in order to create a new international order it is not necessary to design a completely new one. It is enough to start with all states - large and small ones - respecting those principles that, nominally, are seen as basic in the current international order, yet which in fact, to date, have only been valid for the major powers, such as the principle of respect for sovereignty and non-interference.

Such reflection about respect for sovereignty and non-interference may seem somewhat outdated. After all, legal experts and diplomats have long debated the relativity of the concept of sovereignty, just as they have considered interference to be a duty. The decisive step taken in this direction was to affix human rights to respect for sovereignty. Although the world is divided into states, the interests of the individual are generally considered to be superior to those of the states. The basic argument used to defend this position is that states cannot passively watch other states collapse, for reasons both preventative — to avoid the effects of crises spilling over to other states — and humanitarian. This includes opening the door to the right for humanitarian interventions by NGOs, arguing that they are politically neutral, as opposed to states that don't select their interventions for reasons of urgency of humanitarian assistance, but rather for reasons of economic interest and specific policy. In Brazil, in order to deal with crisis situations in neighbouring countries, Foreign Minister Celso Amorim formulated the idea of non-indifference.

Consensus on interference in a broad sense is already formed, thus, leaving diplomats and legal experts in an eternal discussion concerning the conditions in which this should happen. Therefore, it would not be realistic to think that we can return to the former

position of strict adherence to the principle of sovereignty. In fact, it would be considered a setback, since such a consensus has been formed given the need of states, and even NGOs, to no longer passively watch the unfolding of flagrant acts of disrespect for human rights that arise from a state's loss of control over its population in deep crisis.

The crucial question that arises, in short, is how one should realize interference. The peoples of the periphery in general, and the BRICS in particular argue that it is no longer bearable to witness the NATO using overwhelming military power to amplify conflicts and impose solutions based on its exclusive interests. Instead of using all diplomatic and military apparatus to reduce and avoid conflicts swiftly, calling on parties to negotiate and resolve the issues diplomatically, the NATO, supposedly defending human rights, imposes outcomes by the use of strength. That is how it was recently in Libya, and is currently in Syria.

Conclusion

When we consider the evolution of the NATO and the new Strategic Concept adopted in Lisbon, which incorporated the original objective of "collective defence" with the new objectives of "crisis management" and "cooperative security", we can see the impossibility of a reconciliatory policy position with BRICS countries. The roles that the NATO assigns to itself and the scope of its interventions lead the NATO to collide head-on with the idea of a democratic international order as envisaged by BRICS. The NATO defends the thesis that the world will be safer and will have more favourable conditions for establishing peace when all states convert into liberal democracies, based on the Anglo-Saxon model. Meanwhile, with regard to the relations between the states, the NATO maintains an international order that is both oligarchic and authoritarian.

The strain of this contradiction between the NATO's desire to keep world power concentrated in its hands, and BRICS's desire to democratize international relations, forms the backdrop of current international politics; while the NATO resorts to forcing solutions, BRICS recommends dialogue for overcoming international conflicts.

Obviously, this is an uneven battle. The strength of BRICS lies in its member's ability to act together in international institutions, using only the instrument of political persuasion. BRICS does not possess a military force, nor does it contemplate creating one. In addition, in terms of security and defence, the countries that compose it are rather different: Russia and China are nuclear powers and have permanent seats on the UN Security Council; India has nuclear capability; Brazil and South Africa are not militarily significant states, and have even renounced the possession of nuclear weapons. The dual status of Russia and China—each being members of the UN Security Council and nuclear powers—demands respect. As both hold a veto power in the Security Council, the NATO exercises great caution when it comes to proposing military intervention in areas which Russia and China consider vital to their own national security.

Besides this remarkable difference that distinguishes the BRICS members in the face of NATO military solutions to international issues, we must also consider the political situation of each. Russia and China possess an internal political unity when it comes to

national goals. As much as the NATO seeks to awaken and feed political dissent and encourage separatism through pressure from academia and the media, repeatedly denouncing the political system of the two countries as authoritarian and violating human rights, it fails to break their national unity. The same is not the same in India, South Africa and Brazil. These three BRICKS nations lack the same political unity. All of them are vulnerable, through diplomacy, academia and the media, to NATO actions. A significant portion of the political elite, intellectuals, media and military in these countries welcomes the Western hegemonic view of international relations, accepting the interventionist practice of the NATO, which it considers "normal", and even showing willingness to agreements.

In the specific case of Brazil, the NATO has applied pressure in an attempt to lure Brazil into cooperation in the South Atlantic. As the process of regional integration advances through the strengthening of UNASUR and consolidating of its Defence Council, composed of all South American countries, it leads to the substitution of the North American conceived concept of hemispheric defence for the South American concept of defence. Attention now is turning to the sea. The main factors for this pressure are: The sovereignty of Britain over the Falkland Islands and St Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha; coordinated action by the Portuguese, always concerned not to lose influence over the former African colonies, so as not to diminish its status further in the European Union; and the permanent interest of the United States for oil.

In conclusion, and returning to the question that introduces this text, I suppose that we have presented the reasons that impede Brazil's cooperation with the NATO. We can see that the reasons are profound. In the case of Brazil, even if we admit that there are sectors of society willing to cooperate, we also note that such a provision totally ignores the will to defend the sovereignty and decision-making autonomy of the state within the international system of power.