

## EDITOR'S NOTE

This issue of *Austral: Brazilian Journal of Strategy and International Relations* was prepared during the extraordinary moment in which the coronavirus pandemic has affected the field of International Relations, a subject on which we have published a brief introductory note. The necessary discussion on the medical and health aspects of the problem, however, has left little room for a deeper analysis of its political, social, economic and diplomatic impacts. As it occurred during the Spanish Flu, political and strategic disputes and agendas continue to run their courses and even intensify. What we also observe is that, in addition to the deepening of the cleavages between powers, a difference between political, economic and societal models also emerges, in which the emphasis on a market-oriented worldview is opposed to that of the state.

The thematic addressed on this issue, on *World Scenarios and the Brazilian Recoil in International Affairs*, is of great relevance. A first set of three articles, written by Brazilian internationalists, analyses the recent changes in the country's foreign policy. The first addresses the decline of Brazil's international influence, the following the effects of the Brazilian crisis on South-South Cooperation and the third the participation of the country in the defunct South American Defence Council as a stabilising element in the South American region. What is observed is that the priority that was given to the domestic agenda has reduced and redirected the foreign policy program.

The second set of articles are focused on: Russian and American competition in Venezuela, authored by an Indian academic; Paraguay's relations with Taiwan, written by a Paraguayan academic; and the elements of subnational diplomacy in Chile. These three original approaches are focused on the South American regional scenario, which has shown unpredictable evolution. Against many predictions, the Venezuelan regime has survived until then. At the same time, the paradigmatic Chilean model finds itself in crisis, and Paraguay continues to resist Beijing's diplomatic offensive in the Americas, hence Paraguay is the largest country to maintain relations with the Republic of China (ROC).

The third set is composed of Eurasian articles, with one analysing the attitudes of NATO and the Organisation for Shanghai Cooperation in the Afghan conflict, signed by authors from Poland and Kyrgyzstan. Another addresses the geopolitics of Iran as a buffer state, and the following the

challenges and opportunities of the Chinese initiative of the Belt and Road. The first two authors' view on the role of the aforementioned International Organisations in relation to the Afghan conflict brings original elements to the table, in the same way that the article authored by the Iranian scholar discusses the geopolitical theory of the buffer state and applies it to the case of Iran. In its turn, the challenges and opportunities of the Belt and Road Initiative, presented by a Brazilian academic and a Russian scholar, also add a different view to the infrastructure project.

The last set of articles deals with economic, social and health problematics in the Geopolitical South, especially in Africa. The concept of semiperiphery in its development process and the role of International Organisations in the construction of a "poverty trap" in the African continent are thoroughly analysed. The African case studies showcased here receive an approach that reflects on the conditions of the persistence of poverty and the distribution of international resources in the health sector. The role of International Organisations in perpetuating African difficulties is analysed realistically, overcoming postmodern narratives, which impoverish the analysis of international relations.

As a registered trademark of *Austral: Brazilian Journal of Strategy and International Relations*, the Geopolitical South (Third World) constitutes not only the thematic focus of this issue, but also the theoretical and analytical axis for understanding major global problems.

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