

## POST-TRUMP DIPLOMACY OUTLOOK

The electoral defeat of Republican candidate Donald Trump and the return to power of the Democrats with Joseph Biden cannot be left unexamined, considering its implications for international relations. Here we present notes from *NERINT Strategic Analysis*, written by experts and divided into thematic issues and bilateral relations between the United States and the most relevant nations at the global level.

### The Brazil-US Agenda in Joe Biden's Era

Eurico de Lima Figueiredo<sup>1</sup>

It already has been said, albeit in a blague tone, regarding subsequent United States governments, that the best Republican who takes office is a Democrat, while the best Democrat is a Republican. Donald Trump had brought novelties to the American political process. Negative ones, from a democratic point of view. He proved to be a manipulator of public opinion, encouraged the activities of the “digital militias”, created factoids, and made use of an old device of the enemies of democracy, fake news. He led the country into the post-truth era. According to The Washington Post, it took him just over 1,200 days to hit the 20,000 mark of false or misleading statements. *Trump in power was not a Republican, he was Trump*. He unveiled, in the US, a new way of governing and found wide acceptance in vast segments of the country's electorate. In his country, he encouraged radicalization and polarization as a means of achieving constant preeminence. It wasn't quite “America first”. It was “Trump first”. He was not reelected. But he was endorsed by almost 74 million Americans.

The victory of Joe Biden - a politician with a long political career (more than half a century) - puts the American political process back on track. He will be a democrat with social concerns and will seek to ease the political tensions inherited from the previous government. Internally, at least in the first year, it will inherit serious economic problems, largely caused by the new coronavirus. The United States' Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is expected

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to contract around 4.3% in 2020, while the unemployment rate may increase to something close to 7.5%. On the other hand, COVID's virulence, denied by the former president, devastated society, with more than 260,000 fatal cases. In the opposite direction, China is expected to register a growth of 1.9% in 2020 according to IMF projections. There, the public health crisis, if not eradicated, is now under control. The centralizing state has imposed firm containment policies based on strict confinement and large-scale detection tests, constantly monitoring new outbreaks. In 2021, it is expected to expand its global presence, in light of a 4.4% drop in the global economy, according to IMF estimates. China knows what it wants from Brazil, but there is no similar evidence from the Brazilian foreign policy towards China..

During Joe Biden's presidency, South America will increasingly be Latin America. This means that instruments created in the last decade of the century, such as UNASUR and its Defense Council, will continue to have a negative reception in American foreign policy. It is necessary to consider, in a due account, a probable line of action by the US State Department to make its operations in the region as a whole more flexible, but in favor, as always, of its national objectives and interests. Regarding Venezuela, for example, Trump's strong stance of force should not be repeated. The latter, at the beginning of last year, said that he did not rule out the possibility of military intervention in Venezuela. Previously, he had recognized the opponent of Nicolás Maduro's government, Juan Guaidó, as legitimate President, although he had not presented any legal basis for his understanding. It cannot be forgotten, however, that Biden was the vice president of Barack Obama who, in 2015, issued a presidential decree classifying Venezuela as a threat to the national security of the United States, imposing severe economic and financial sanctions on that country.

Concerning Brazil, what to expect from Biden? Certainly, he will not have, at least in the beginning, political sympathy for the Bolsonaro government. After all, Bolsonaro never hid his preference for Biden's opponent. Bolsonaro's diplomacy practiced a policy aligned with the administration of Donald Trump. After the election results, he did not recognize Biden's victory in the presidential race. During the election campaign, on a debate on TV, the Democratic candidate proposed a \$ 20 billion fund for the Amazon so that Brazil could tackle the environmental issue. Then, he added, brandishing the "stick policy" that, if the offer was not accepted, the country could suffer significant economic consequences. The statement prompted President Bolsonaro to respond, stating that "when the spittle runs out, gunpowder is needed, otherwise it won't work". His speech, in itself unusual, was equally paradoxical, insofar as Brazilian diplomacy practiced, during the Trump

administration, a foreign policy subservient to the guidelines of American foreign policy.

All of these obstacles must be put into perspective, however, given the long-term American objectives and interests in Brazil. During the Trump administration, Brazil accepted the ethanol quota, agreed with the surcharge on Brazilian products such as steel, and Brazilian exports to the United States fell. The agreement that provides for the US to use the Alcântara Launch Center, in Maranhão, could lead Brazil to lose the right to access parts of its territory, without receiving technology transfer and, even, threatening the Brazilian aerospace project in search for its technological competence. Biden will most likely sustain these gains and seek others. Nevertheless, the biggest stakes in play involve the so-called 5G technology. The dispute will result in the largest auction held in Brazil and one of the largest in the world. Amid the fierce trade war between the United States and China, Biden will be similar to Trump. He will put pressures on Brazil to ban the participation of Chinese Huawei, which will not be passively accepted by China, Brazil's largest trading partner nowadays. It will be a quarrelsome decision. Perhaps, apart from personal preferences, the identification with the United States and of its Latin America policy will prevail, and not merely to one specific President.

Brazil/United States agenda will change in order to, mostly, remain the same.

## Security & Defense Challenges: Estimating Relevant Topics for Biden's Administration<sup>2</sup>

Eduardo Xavier Ferreira Glaser Migon<sup>3</sup>

After the polls were closed, voters chose Democrat Joseph Robinette "Joe" Biden Jr. as the President of the United States of America (USA). Therefore, and in the specific interest of this brief reflection, new possibilities for the Security & Defense (S&D) agenda are opened, as a consequence of both being a new administration and, additionally, a party alternation. Naturally, the theme attracts worldwide attention, given the relevance of the US as a

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<sup>2</sup> This analysis refers to personal understanding, expressing views and opinions on the topic, which are independent of the positioning of any institutions and/or instances to which the author is formally linked or informally associated. The data used is entirely in the public domain.

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military power with influence in a wide range of geographical areas and an extensive list of critical themes.

At the outset, it is worth highlighting the experience of the new president with the theme of S&D. He is a politician with a long history in the federal Senate, where he was a member and chaired, for many years, the Foreign Relations Committee. He also served as Vice President during the Obama administration (2008-2016), a period in which he had access to the immense range of S&D information made available by agencies that ensure the situational awareness of the “leader of the free world”, such as the National Security Agency, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Central Intelligence Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, etc.

Given the political elements and personal trajectory summarized above, it is estimated that the United States S&D agenda will evolve under new shapes, balancing classic and traditional aspects with elements from Joe Biden’s worldview. An important element to be considered, and still pending, is concerning the Democratic Party’s ability to obtain a majority in the Senate, with repercussions on the construction of the president-elect’s political agenda, which will depend on greater or lesser articulation. Greater freedom of action tends to allow for more innovation, in addition to bringing the final results closer to the presidential intention. On the other hand, less freedom of action tends to keep the agenda closer to the consensus and traditional positions, making the adherence of the concrete agenda to the Democratic candidate’s electoral proposals less intense.

Based on a multilateralist view, it is estimated that there will be greater US presence among organizations interested in the international S&D agenda. In this sense, traditional allies, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), tend to resume their roles and relevance, as well as a greater presence within the United Nations, influencing and, if necessary, vetoing themes on the S&D global development agenda.

In addition to the traditional issues associated with areas of international friction, such as tensions in the Middle East or the Korean peninsula, it is estimated that issues arising from the international (re)balance of power, whose center of gravity will be necessary for the future, absorb the emergence of China and, also, the (re)emergence of Russia as S&D actors with global interests. These are dynamics that tend to expand contacts and polarize positions in areas such as Alaska and the Arctic Ocean, Taiwan and the Pacific Ocean, India and the Indian Ocean, and the Balkans, for example.

The technological race, as well as the strategies associated with the new battle domains, also tend to have a greater presence on the S&D agenda. The maintenance of supremacy that is often evidenced by the United States

concerning space, cyberspace, and the mastery of critical technologies will be subject to competition and to continuously high costs. Nanotechnology, Quantum, Artificial Intelligence, Biotechnologies, military use of space, etc., are examples of the multiplicity of technologies that suggest growing challenges for a nation that wants to remain at the technological top.

The new challenges for US S&D are likely to coexist with traditional elements, of which at least two stand out. International terrorism tends to remain an important aspect for American actions, that is, they will continue to influence and demand critical aspects such as the nature and dimension of the Armed Forces, development and allocation of intelligence systems, deployment of means in areas specific to the terrain, etc. Budget constraints are another element of probable continuity, that is, the new management tends to have its agenda shaped, in this case in a restrictive way, by the difficulties associated with the high costs of adopting S&D policies and strategies in parallel with the growing demands of other public policies within the context of the national budget.

Finally, it is worth noting the emergence of the environmental agenda, which includes the agenda associated with climate change. Far long ago, great powers have incorporated these elements into their respective analyzes of power, freedom of action, and interest in national security. Biopiracy, air or marine pollution, predatory exploitation of natural resources, greenhouse effect, etc., are elements of specific interest to diplomats and military personnel in a wide range of reference countries, including the United States under Biden.

Predicting the future is impossible. Defining scenarios and estimating future possibilities is, on the other hand, inherent to political and strategic analysis, being a critical aspect for any planning or estimation in S&D. This brief reflection is a endeavour that only aims to signal initial and preliminary focus of attention, and perhaps, who knows, contribute to the construction of new research agendas.

## Will There Be a New Post-Trump American Diplomacy?

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Donald Trump's election was surprising and his international

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performance was disconcerting, provoking criticism from some and silence from others. He won against the Democrats, the media, the military and even the establishment of his own party, with his reckless entrepreneurial and adventurous instinct. As André Araújo predicted at the beginning of his term, “Donald Trump is a point outside the curve, [...] he is not part of the establishment, [...] he has no experience or political intelligence, [and] will cause a lot of confusion. [...] However, he exists for a concrete reason. Globalization has brought benefits to one social layer in the US and immense losses to another. Contrary to what the Washington Consensus preached, globalization is an unbalanced and inefficient process. [...] Trump is the result of the end of a dream, but not the solution to relieve it”.

Determined to retrieve American economic primacy, he ran over International Organizations and his own allies, confronted Russia and China, abandoned multilateral agreements and engaged in an unusual diplomacy in the Middle East. The nation that drove globalization was ruled for four years by an opponent of globalization, elected by the Americans who were victims of its negative effects. Also according to Araújo, “Trump may fail, but the causes that elected him remain latent and will be difficult to resolve. [...] Each country and region will react in a certain way. If it is possible to see any positive outcome, it would be the slight disruption of the financial and commercial globalization that is suffocating the world, to throw cold water on the politically correct movements that are annoying the planet, to dismantle a suffocating bureaucracy that is paralyzing world growth [...], NGOs, cooperation agreements, endless and illogical compliances [...] that hinder companies and citizens without minimally disturbing traffickers, criminals and terrorists. Trump is a kind of insecticide, which will panic the anthill until it stops or depletes its energy. A historic accident like so many others”<sup>5</sup>.

However, Biden’s victory will most likely bring more changes in form than in content. The structural problems of the US are severe and a basic duality plays an essential role which is increasingly difficult to reconcile: the country is both a national state and the heart of the world system. They continue to maintain a significant advantage over their rival allies and still maintain the strategic initiative, despite their relative decline. The key to the problem, however, lies in the US itself, which “will not be able to maintain the necessary degree of global involvement to preserve its global role and its security and external defense without a deep internal economic adjustment” that will allow them to restore their competitiveness. But they will not be able to adjust the domestic economy without maintaining the international

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5 Araújo, André. 2017. “Trump em 200 anos de História”. In. *Solidariedade Ibero-Americana*. Rio de Janeiro: MSI, p.9.

involvement necessary to obtain external resources, “and without contributing to the construction of an international order whose degree of consensuality guarantees a leadership that is inversely proportional to the amount of strength that it needs to be maintained”<sup>6</sup>.

There is a traditional debate about the American decline, contrasting the *declinists* and the *renewalists*. The former, having in Paul Kennedy (*The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*) their greatest exponent, argue that the country has reached its maturity point and now needs to find a place in the international order that implies sharing responsibilities with other great powers. Conversely, for Samuel Huntington and Joseph Nye, the country would be undergoing a renewal, and the end of the Cold War would make way for a new American hegemony. Thus, there would be no country capable of challenging the US for a long time.

The difference between the Democrats’ *global* strategy and the Republicans’ *international* strategy also matters. The former are more prone to multilateralism and often attribute to the US a *leadership* role, which manages a code of values and conduct that the country seeks to affirm upon the world, relying on international organizations and elements of the so-called soft power. Thus, such a view implies global interference and permanent monitoring, as the US would be the *center of a global system*. The second, when considering their country as the greatest power, tends to perceive them as a sort of *commander in chief*. Preferring bilateral relations, in which the American nation would always be the strongest side, the Republicans prefer not to organize the world as much, but to exercise their power with force whenever necessary - a world that could even be more plural than the one conceived by the Democrats. In this sense, traditional *hard power* politics would be employed more systematically by Democrats and more *ad hoc* by Republicans. But, ultimately, the two parties advocate for *America First*.

The style of the Trump administration, however, can mislead the analyst. As the cases in the Middle East and North Korea demonstrate, he considers military involvement to be a burden and has been in conflict with the Pentagon and the intelligence services, as he does not represent traditional Republican thinking. If Obama was more socially oriented at home, from a military perspective he and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton were very proactive. Thus, the economic and commercial interests defended by Trump will still be maintained and security should also gain equivalent priority. Moreover, the international cleavages caused by his administration are being aggravated by the multiple effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, whose outcomes

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6 Albuquerque, José Guilhon. 1993. “Bill Clinton: um presidente para que século?”. In. *Política Externa*. Vol 1, no 4. São Paulo: Paz e Terra, p. 83.

are not yet clearly defined. There is room for the resumption of previous paradigms, such as the socially oriented domestic model, but in general global power competition should continue, perhaps even more assertively. In addition, the new government will have to balance contradictory claims from the Democratic left wing with demands from Wall Street and the Pentagon, in addition to calming the defeated side.

## The US Electoral System

Cristina Soreanu Pecequilo<sup>7</sup>

On November 7th, 2020, Joe Biden made his first speech after being proclaimed by the media President elect of the United States (US). Compared to other countries that officially announce the winner directly, this part of the process takes longer. First, local governments need to certify the winner, accordingly to their own rules and schedules. Following, the Electoral College voting takes place in December and only on January 6th, 2021, the House of Representatives confirms the results. From election day on November 3rd, till the new President's installment on January 20th, more than two months elapsed.

These phases represent the peculiarities of the US electoral system established by the 1787 Constitution. In place since 1789, and completed by the first ten amendments in 1791, this Constitution had proven to be resilient. The US defines itself as an "institutional endeavor" based on two elements: the 1776 Declaration of Independence and the already mentioned Constitution<sup>8</sup>, elaborated by the founding fathers and framers. As members of the agrarian elites in the US, names such as Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, Thomas Paine, and George Washington, the first President, built a framework that is still an effective to promote the organization of domestic politics sustained on the principles of clashes and elitization.

The principles of clashes are represented by the sharing of responsibilities between the federal and local governments. It allows the attribution of decision making powers and autonomy to local governments vis a vis the State (the so-called Union as defined in these documents) and

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<sup>8</sup> The classical book to study the US Constitution is *The Federalist Papers* (signed by Publius but authored by Alexander Hamilton, John Jay and James Madison).

leads to the overlapping of tasks of the Executive and Legislative powers, as the Judiciary acts as the middle range power. Inspired by Montesquieu's separation of powers in *The Spirit of the Laws*, this institutional arrangement reinforces the checks and balances and mixed government with shared powers principles.

Functionally, this should lead to the permeability and transparency of the system and its accountability. Not so functionally, it brings the Executive and Legislative into a permanent struggle, and generates two realities: a deadlock, when the Executive and Legislative are not controlled by the same party and the need to make the government viable through unilateral actions (Executive Orders that allow the President to make laws). But is the system really permeable and transparent?

The elitization of the system shows just the opposite due to the constitutional filters. The reason for the creation of these filters was to prevent the imbalance of forces, that Tocqueville defines in *Democracy in America* as the tyranny of the majority. The most significant one is the Electoral College, that represents the indirect election for the presidency. It functions based on a "top-bottom" mechanism (and one should not forget that the Constitution defines it as "a process not a place"): the population casts its votes and the winner in each local state gains all the electoral votes of that state. The total of electoral votes is 538, and 270 are needed to win: it does not matter if a candidate has the majority of popular votes, only if this candidate gains more Electoral College votes (nowadays, only Nebraska and Maine share votes amongst the two first candidates, following district lines voting).

The number of votes of each state is proportionally defined by its total population. Since the early days of the Electoral College this distribution was imbalanced: in the 18th century the populational census took into consideration for this allocation the total amount of a state's population, even if it was composed by non-voting citizens (such as slaves and women). These imbalances are long standing, as adjustments in the amount of Electoral College votes are only updated from 10-to-10 years, considering the census. For the 2020 election, for instance, the 2010 census was still the reference. Agrarian, conservative, white, low-density population states were allowed the same number of votes. On the other hand, states that are composed of a majority of urban, suburban, secular and multiracial voters are underrepresented.

Accordingly, to *Fair Vote*<sup>9</sup> data mentioning the extreme poles of over

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9 Fair Vote defines itself as a civil, non-partisan organization in its website, that dates back to 1992. Some of its main donors are: The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Laura and John Arnold Foundation and The Rockefeller Brothers Fund. Data available at: <https://www.fairvote.org/>

and under representation: 1 electoral vote in Wyoming (that has the total of 3 electoral votes) accounts for more than 318% that it should, 1 vote for around 180 thousand people. In California (55 electoral votes), the representation deficit accounts for 85% of the population, 1 electoral vote for over 670 thousand electors.

Another distortion present in the US voting system is represented by the distribution of district votes, inside states, that affects both presidential and legislative elections. In the US, the voting system is defined by districts, which means that candidates for elective positions such as in the Senate or in the House of Representatives, compete in a neighborhood election. Therefore, elections take place in each neighborhood, based on a closed list of candidates and not all candidates against each other. The redesign of districts, in a process called gerrymandering, tends to promote the unification of high-density populational neighborhoods, which cuts their number of representatives in comparison to agrarian areas, leading to the decrease of relative weight of the electorate that represents the majority of the population in the US: urban, suburban, multiracial and secular as mentioned.

This process also makes it more difficult to vote in person, since it concentrates a lot of electors in one same district. The results are long lines that can take hours: one should be reminded that in the US voting is not mandatory, election day is not a holiday, and the wages are paid by the hour, and employers can discount non-worked hours that harms the lower classes that are paid the minimum wage (US\$ 6/hour). These challenges are prompting an enlargement of civil society movements to ensure the right to vote, facilitating the access to electoral registration and voting.

In the 21st century, these distortions led to two presidential elections that had different results in the Electoral College and the popular vote: 2000 (Al Gore X George W. Bush) and 2016 (Hillary Clinton X Donald Trump). Before that, the distortion only had happened in three opportunities, 1824, 1876 and 1888, and not once in the 20th century. The Republican winners of these elections in the Electoral College, W. Bush and Trump, benefited from the mentioned social-economic and political-cultural imbalances. Why not change? But, mainly, is there a will to change?

*Pew Research* data<sup>10</sup> shows that 81% of registered Democrat Party

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fairvote.org/population\_vs\_electoral\_votes. Access November 12, 2020.

<sup>10</sup> Daniller, Andrew. 2020. "A majority of Americans continue to favor replacing Electoral College with a nationwide popular vote". Available at: <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/03/13/a-majority-of-americans-continue-to-favor-replacing-electoral-college-with-a-nationwide-popular-vote/>. Access: August 05, 2020. Pew Research was created in 2004 and its origins date back to the 1990. It is supported financially by the Pew Charitable Trusts that

voters are in favor of change, and the dismissal of the Electoral College, whereas only 32% of Republicans support it. For traditional Republican and Democrat Parties, the update of the College system can mean the loss of control of the political system, allowing the emergence of other parties. In 2020, Jo Jorgensen, the candidate for the Libertarian Party, finished in third place in the majority of states, but will gain no votes in the Electoral College.

However, one cannot underestimate the growth of the will for change, as a result of the transformations in race, gender and class, and the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact Initiative must be mentioned. The NPV goal is to ensure that the popular vote counts, terminating the Electoral College. In order to achieve this, a constitutional change is necessary, and to make the proposal possible for the Legislative, it needs the support of 270 electoral votes. The NPV Initiative debates date back to the 2000s, sponsored by democratic states governments. Since 2006 it was officialized and it gained strength after 2016. Until the 2020 elections in November, the NPV Initiative already accounted for 196 electoral votes, and several states that were not included in this total yet, proposed local referendums to voters to analyze the proposal (still pending definite results due to local counts and legislations).

It is possible that the results of these referendums may allow the proposal to be already forwarded to Congress in 2021. The Democrat victory can lessen this desire for change? Will the balance of forces in the House of Representatives (Democrat majority) and in the Senate (undefined till January 2021) block this initiative? How can disputes between parties and inside parties affect this dynamic? For the following years, these are lingering questions.

## China: Between Engagement and War

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Athos Munhoz Moreira da Silva<sup>12</sup>

Interactions between the US and China are 236 years old (1784-2020). Throughout this period, the time interval in which there was animosity between them is of 21 years (1950-1971). The reciprocal influence between the

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collects donations from private enterprises and individuals.

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US and China conditioned the territorial formation of the US - it was decisive for the US to extend its presence on the Pacific Coast<sup>13</sup>. Together, since the 19th century, they created the conditions for the displacement of the world center of gravity from the Atlantic to the Pacific<sup>14</sup>. But, in addition to their reciprocal influence, China and the US have decisively influenced universal history. The United States entered World War II only because of its support for China in the Second Sino-Japanese War. In short, China was the reason the United States was involved in the greatest military conflagration in history.

On the other hand, when the US found itself engaged in the “confrontation for global predominance”<sup>15</sup> against the USSR, it was the alliance with China that offered them victory. At the end of the Cold War, the United States chose to intensify the transfer of companies and capital to China. After the Wars in the former Yugoslavia (1991-2001), September 11 (2001) came, followed by the invasion of Iraq (2003). Then, US relations with China – cold due to the Tiananmen Incident (1989) and to the bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade (1999), also heated up at the political level. In fact, China became the guarantor of the American war cycle (2003-2020) in the Middle East, by becoming the main buyer of US Government bonds.

The 2008 crisis occurred in close conjunction with the Surge in Iraq and with the Subprime crisis in the US (2007). China became an exporter of capital, competing not only with Japan, but also with the US. In 2009, Barack Obama assumed the presidency of the United States with a promise to end wars in the Middle East. But then came the Arab Spring (2010) and the “Asia Pivot” (2011). The beginning of the crisis between the US and China occurred when the US announced its “containment” – Obama’s “Pivot for Asia” (in a speech in Darwin, Australia, on November 17th, 2011). Although the American president claimed that it was about economic containment, the measures then outlined were of a purely military nature – the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) started to be negotiated in 2008 and signed in 2015, therefore, in spite of the “pivot”. As a result of the containment, governments in China and Japan collapsed, putting an end to the projected East Asian Community between China, Japan and South Korea.

China’s response was holistic: in 2011, it launched the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), its own version of a (gradualist)

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<sup>13</sup> Cumings, Bruce. 2009. *Dominion from Sea to Sea: Pacific Ascendancy and American Power*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

<sup>14</sup> Marx, Karl. 1850. Deslocamentos do Centro de Gravidade Mundial. Nova Gazeta Renana. *Revista Política e Económica*. n. 2. fev. 1850. Available at: <http://www.marxists.org/portugues/marx/1850/02/deslocamento.htm>.

<sup>15</sup> Brzezinski, Zbigniew. 1987. *EUA e URSS: O Grande Desafio*. Rio de Janeiro: Nordica.

free trade agreement, to oppose the TPP. In 2013, it launched the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), offering an alternative to the unfulfilled promise of globalization: the effective global circulation of goods. The plan is to unite Eurasia, from Tokyo to Rome. In the same year, China created the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), since the Asian Development Bank (ADB) was controlled by the Americans. In the military field, modernization has been considerably accelerated. All the destroyers and aegis cruisers that China now owns (09 Type-52D; 01 Type-55), as well as fifth-generation aircraft carriers and aircraft, were built after the Pivot for Asia. In addition to the new series of medium and regional missiles capable of reaching Japan - Dong Feng DF-16; DF-21C; DF-26 - and moving aircraft carriers - the DF-17; DF-21D; DF-26B.

As a direct result of the “Arab Springs”, wars broke out in Syria (2011), Libya (2014) and Yemen (2015) - with varying degrees of US intervention. In 2014, a coup in Ukraine overthrew the pro-Russian government - and, in response, the Russians annexed Crimea (2015). In the same year, they started to intervene in the Civil War in Syria, making it impossible to implement the Pivot in Asia - as will be seen below, eventually Biden will not have to deal with this kind of problem. The cost of military operations was also felt within the US. Between 2011 and 2016, the US economy grew less than 0.7% per year or even shrank (World Bank 2016)<sup>16</sup>. As a result, Obama’s candidate Hillary Clinton lost the election to Donald Trump in 2016. At the heart of Trump’s proposal was the resumption of economic growth. Once again, the promises were to achieve peace - unlike Obama, Trump did not start any war - and to face the exchange and fiscal deficits. In 1991, the US trade deficit was only US\$ 66 billion, compared to the current US\$ 729 billion (USA 2020)<sup>17</sup>. To face the trade deficit and resume growth, a plan was proposed to invest one and a half trillion dollars in infrastructure and to re-concentrate the production of goods within the country.

In 2017, the US trade deficit with China was US\$ 395 billion<sup>18</sup>. It was then that the Trade War began (2018). Two years later, the Chinese gave in. In January 2020, a preliminary version of the agreement was established,

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<sup>16</sup> World Bank. 2016, *GDP Growth (annual %) - United States 2011-2016*. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?end=2016&locations=US&start=2011>.

<sup>17</sup> USA - United States of America. 2020. *US Census. Trade in Goods with World, Seasonally Adjusted 1989-2020*. Available at: <https://census.gov/foreign-trade/balance/c0004.html>. Accessed on dec. 16 2020.

<sup>18</sup> World Bank. 2017, *World Integrated Trade Solutions. United States Trade Balance, Exports and Imports by country and region 2017*. Available at: <https://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/en/Country/USA/Year/2017/TradeFlow/EXPIMP>.

according to which the Chinese pledged to buy US\$ 200 billion more in American products. In view of the substantial and abrupt reduction, it was an auspicious start - even if it were to be achieved at the expense of Russia and Brazil, which export oil, minerals and agricultural products (at least the first and the latter would be supplied to China by the US). China is Brazil's largest trading partner. In 2019, the total volume of trade was US\$ 98.63 billion, with a surplus for Brazil of US\$ 28 billion. Total Brazilian exports were US\$ 63.35 billion. Soy accounts for US\$ 20.46 billion, and oil for US\$ 15.48 billion of the total exports to China<sup>19</sup>.

Perhaps for negotiation technique, or maybe because he was drunk on success, the fact is that Trump then decided to securitize the Huawei problem. In May 2019, Trump banned the company's operations in the country and issued an executive order for the semiconductor companies to stop supplying them to China - these measures were later postponed. Only 16% of semiconductors used in China are produced in the country, and only half of these are made by Chinese companies. Even with a planned investment in semiconductors totaling US\$ 118 billion over five years ("Made in China 2025"), this would mean an abrupt interruption of supply that would put the country's electronics industry at serious risk (Lewis 2019, p. 01-02). The economic pressure was accompanied by the military pressure, so there was a significant increase in the "Freedom of Navigation" (FON) missions in the South China Sea (MSC), and, not rarely, incidents between US and Chinese vessels occurred.

By accusing China of being responsible for the Covid-19 pandemic, Trump opened a path fraught with the most serious consequences. While Democrats have been quick to absolve China and condemn Trump - in an election year - this accusation looms as an asset the president-elect can use if he decides to risk a war with China. In short, the scenario that previously seemed absurd, the two largest economies in the world entering a conflict, became believable, since it now has a *causus belli*. If Biden succeeds in obtaining a return to the World Health Organization (WHO), to the World Trade Organization (WTO) and to the Paris Agreement, he will have the possibility to manage with China – albeit on a multilateral basis – the fight against the pandemic (Covax), its effects (resuming free trade negotiations), and to raise environmental issues as a reason to promote talks. However, if the Republican majority in the Senate is confirmed - there will be elections in Georgia on January 5th, 2021 - it is possible that these initiatives are blocked.

Most likely, the new US government will use the perverse alternative

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<sup>19</sup> Brazil. 2019. Ministério do Desenvolvimento, Indústria, Comércio Exterior. Exportação e Importação Geral 2019. Available at: <http://comexstat.mdic.gov.br/pt/geral/24948>.

of the security market reserve. Under the pretext of piracy and espionage, they may keep the boycott of Chinese technologies. Rather than negotiating tariffs and trade deficits, it is more likely that the US will pressure China on issues such as Hong Kong's autonomy, the treatment of Uighur separatists in Xinjiang and the question of Taiwan's independence. As Biden intends to settle with Iran, it will also be possible for the US to intensify military pressure on China. After all, it will release an entire group of attack aircraft carriers (Carrier Strike Group), which could be moved to East Asia. To this end, the British decision to move a fleet of its newly formed group of aircraft carriers to the Pacific also counts. These two new groups of aircraft carriers may add to what already has a home in Guam, tripling their joint naval aircraft forces in the region. This can, of course, fuel the desires for sovereignty maintained by Tsai Ing-wen - Taiwan's current president. From the above, three scenarios can be inferred.

The best scenario, stemming from Biden's promise of multilateralism, involves the development of a multilateral peace agenda - to deal with the results of the "Springs" in the Middle East; the reconstruction - to cope with the damage caused by the pandemic; and the development - to provide incentives through the multilateral system (World Bank, IMF, WTO) to form customs unions and regional blocs. Together, these initiatives would represent a game with a sum above zero for the US and China, which would have multiplied their possibilities of commercial exchange with third parties. An intermediate scenario, expressing the establishment's victory, would be that of a kind of "Cold War" around the boycott of technology and infrastructure companies, of investment, and the veto in the participation of energy consortia. In this scenario, the Clean Network program is exacerbated as a form of extra-economic coercion to obtain market reserves for the 5G Internet and for products from the Internet of Things (IoT). This may be justified due to possible shocks in the South China Sea.

The worst-case scenario, arising from Taiwan's declaration of independence or its recognition by the US, involves a Local War around the Island. Despite being geographically confined, it will systematically affect International Relations. Even if the worst happens, it is important to remember that the US and China were already at war in Korea and even this conflict did not take away more than two decades of good relations between the countries. These are the two largest economies in the world. It is important for Brazil to maintain a position of neutrality. The US and China will be able to forgive each other, but they will hardly do it with others. Then, to have a broad perspective is important. Eventually, the present crisis relates to a deeper phenomenon, with a change in the system - the type of unity that

makes up the International System. In other words, the transition from a world centered on a single civilization to another, a pluri-civilizational one. And just as American civilization took more than two centuries to reach its peak – to be endowed with sufficient power to generate counterparts – this new period will not be brief, fleeting or peaceful.

## Putin's Silence: Speculation and Indifference on US-Russian Relations

Rodrigo Ianhez<sup>20</sup>

There are several speculations regarding the reasons for the delay of Russian President Vladimir Putin in congratulating the Democratic candidate Joe Biden for his victory in the presidential elections of the United States. In the West, particularly in the US, the hypothesis arises, which sometimes flirts with conspiracy theories, that Trump would have deeper relations with the Russian government or that he would depend to some degree on the Russians and their intelligence apparatus. Meanwhile, among the citizens of Russia and even among the country's media, there is a climate of indifference towards the destinies of American politics. Is there a delay on Putin's part in congratulating Biden on his victory?

Moscow attaches little importance to the gesture, or rather, to the lack of a gesture by Vladimir Putin. The press secretary of the Russian presidency, Dmitry Peskov, stressed that the Kremlin is awaiting an official announcement from the American electoral bodies and a resolution of the judicial conflicts raised by Donald Trump during the counting of votes so that the Russian government can enter into contact with the president-elect. Putin himself reinforced these statements, emphasizing that this is a pure protocolar issue<sup>21</sup>.

However, some analysts point out that Moscow's reaction has been different, for example, towards President Aleksandr Lukashenko of Belarus. The Kremlin sent a congratulatory telegram the day after the election in the neighboring country, even before the official results were confirmed. Another recent event, however, also served to demonstrate that the Putin government is just being strict with the protocol and does not intend to enter into larger disputes: in Moldova, another country in the Russian sphere of influence,

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<sup>20</sup> Historian from Moscow State University.

<sup>21</sup> Available at: <https://ria.ru/20201122/bayden-1585774360.html>

the pro-Kremlin candidate Igor Dodon was defeated at the polls. Moscow did not hesitate to send official congratulations to president-elect Maia Sandu, considered pro-Western, as soon as the official results were announced on November 16th.

Another fact that points to the normality of the situation is the track record of the Russian president concerning previous American elections. Since Putin took command of the Russian Federation in 2000, there have been six presidential elections in the United States. On all these occasions, there was a standard response from the Russian authorities: Vladimir Putin or, between 2008 and 2012, his replacement Dmitri Medvedev, greeted the winning candidate on the day his opponents recognized victory or the following day, without exception. Even in the troubled 2000 election, contested by Al Gore and George W. Bush, Russian officials waited the defeated candidate to concede in order to salute the winner.

There are still other elements that have caused misinterpretations about the stance of the Russians. An interview with the president of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation, Ella Pamfilova, sparked speculation in the West. Pamfilova stated that the American postal voting system opens up immense possibilities for fraud and therefore decided not to adopt something similar in Russia<sup>22</sup>. The statements, however, were not made as a representative of the Electoral Commission or the Russian government, as several reports published in Brazil tried to portray<sup>23</sup>. The Russian authorities have not yet officially commented on the matter.

Therefore, we can see that as far as Russia is concerned, whilst the alleged deadlock between Putin and Biden generates great speculation abroad, it is seen as a matter of little relevance by the Russian public. More than once, the Kremlin has emphasized that it is ready to work with whoever is elected to the presidency of the United States, and at no time has the Russian president expressed preferences. On the contrary, he stated directly that he does not see any major differences between American candidates concerning Russia. The same indifference is shown by the Russian population. According to the Levada Center, one of the country's leading research institutes, 65% of the population believes that it does not matter which candidate is elected president of the United States. These data conflict with the previous 2016 election, when 60% of respondents expressed a preference for Donald Trump

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22 Available at: [https://tass.ru/politika/994517?utm\\_source=twitter.com&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_campaign=smm\\_social\\_share](https://tass.ru/politika/994517?utm_source=twitter.com&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=smm_social_share).

23 Available at: <https://noticias.uol.com.br/ultimas-noticias/afp/2020/11/09/comissao-eleitoral-russa-questiona-legitimidade-de-voto-por-correio-nos-eua.htm>.

over Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton<sup>24</sup>.

These figures reflect the fact that relations between the United States and Russia were not normalized and even worsened during the Trump administration. During the 2016 elections, the Russian media had an exaggerated expectation that Donald Trump would prove to be a potential Russian ally or at least represent an improvement in relations between countries. None of these promises have been kept.

It is not surprising that relations between the Russian Federation and the United States have never been so bad since the Cold War. Trump not only prolonged the sanctions imposed on the Russian Federation in 2014, when the Russians took over the Crimean peninsula, but also set new sanctions in retaliation for the attempted assassination of double agent Sergey Skrypal in 2018 in the UK. New sanctions continue to be imposed by Americans until recently, as at the end of September this year. Between June 2017 and September 2020, the Donald Trump administration approved 276 new sanctions against Russia by US individuals and companies<sup>25</sup>.

Even more symbolic is the prospect of sanctions that Trump would be preparing before the end of his term, targeting, among others, Russian agencies Rosatom and Roscosmos. Russian media outlets RIA Novosti claims that the US government would have included the two institutions in a package of sanctions against companies linked to China's Ministry of Defense. If confirmed, such a decision would be a major blow to Russia's prestige, and especially to Roscosmos, the country's space agency. For nearly a decade, NASA relied on the Russians to send astronauts into space, in a collaborative project with the agency. Not surprisingly, the possibility of sanctions against the organization that ensured the maintenance of the American space program and the International Space Station is seen in Russia as a stab in the back.

Alongside the British government, the Trump administration has shown itself to be one of the most determined to maintain economic sanctions against Russia, even going against the interests of some European Union groups seeking to re-establish economic ties. In France, politicians of different orientations have already spoken out in favor of a reevaluation of European sanctions against the Russian Federation. In Germany, a country that until 2014 held the position of Russia's largest trading partner when it ceded the position to China, statements by former Chancellor Gerhard Schröder called attention, characterizing the sanctions as meaningless measures.

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24 Available at: <https://www.levada.ru/2020/10/21/predvybornaya-kampaniya-v-ssha/>.

25 Available at: <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/23/09/2020/5bffb0f09a79470ff5378627>.

Some political commentators point to Putin's alleged personal disagreement with Joe Biden as a more likely reason for the Kremlin's delay in recognizing the Democrat's victory than an alleged closeness to Donald Trump. This divergence would have originated in 2012, when Biden, on an official visit to Russia as Vice President of the United States, would have met with representatives of the opposition and expressed the wish that then President Dmitry Medvedev would be a better candidate for reelection, instead of Putin. These rumors, however, hardly escape the field of speculation and ignore the eminently pragmatic character of Russian foreign policy. This character is constantly relegated by Western analysts, in favor of a more ideological interpretation of the Kremlin's actions.

The narrative of Donald Trump's alleged proximity to Russia, however, is more about American domestic politics than about a relationship between the Republican and the Russian government. Some of the most bombastic elements of Trump's alleged collaboration with the Russian government have been gradually denied. The Steele dossier, for example, widely circulated during the 2016 American elections, is the source of several conspiracy stories, such as the infamous prostitute party that Trump allegedly hosted at the Moscow Ritz-Carlton hotel and which would be used by Russian intelligence for blackmailing purposes. The main sources of such a dossier have been discredited over the years. Even the virtual newspaper Meduza, a vehicle for the opposition to the Putin government, recently published an extensive piece pointing out the countless inconsistencies in the report.

Speculations aside, the group of leaders who insist on not recognizing Biden's victory is increasingly diminished. After a few days of silence, the leader of the People's Republic of China, Xi Jinping, sent his congratulations to the Democratic candidate. On the 15th, following the official electoral confirmation, Vladimir Putin, Mexican López Obrador, and Brazilian Jair Bolsonaro all formally greeted Joe Biden.

## Germany: A Return to Normalcy?

Guilherme Thudium<sup>26</sup>

Germany–United States relations are decisive for the future of international politics and the international liberal order shaped under

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American leadership. Donald Trump's foreign policy was traumatic for German diplomacy, which welcomed Joe Biden's victory in the 2020 elections. However, the Trump administration should not be seen as an isolated disruptive element in the post-Cold War transatlantic relationship. Hence, the 'return to normalcy'<sup>27</sup> anticipated by Biden's election should be analyzed with caution when it comes to the bilateral relations.

Germany, the economic and geopolitical epicenter in unified Europe, has always had a complex relationship with the West. Since the Second World War, the relationship of German and European leaders towards the United States has been ambivalent. American global protagonism during the second half of the twentieth century was largely maintained through two 'core states' in Asia and Europe, respectively, which were shaped to serve the purposes of the hegemonic power: Japan and Germany<sup>28</sup>. Paradoxically, the two greatest enemies of the United States during World War II became its greatest allies in the postwar period. During the Cold War, therefore, West Germany was a semi-sovereign state bound to the Atlantic superpower, one of the occupying powers in German territory following the Potsdam Conference of 1945. In this sense, the reconstruction of Germany and even the drafting of the German Basic Law of 1949, the current constitution of the Federal Republic, were carried out under Washington's guidance and supervision<sup>29</sup>.

Over the past two decades, however, German attitude towards the Atlantic alliance has changed significantly, signaling a search for greater autonomy<sup>30</sup>. This is part of a broader tendency towards international autonomy as a leadership of the European Union. After the 2003 invasion of Iraq – to which Germany was against –, then chancellor Gerhard Schröder spoke of a 'German Way' (*Deutscher Weg*) in international affairs. Other stances also revealed discontent with the policy of liberal hegemony pursued by the United States, such as the abstention from voting in the UN Security Council on NATO's intervention in Libya during the Arab Spring, in 2011, and the

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27 'A Return to Normalcy' was the campaign slogan of United States presidential candidate Warren G. Harding for the 1920 election, the first election held after the end of World War I. It has also become associated with the 2020 presidential campaign of Joe Biden (Klein, Ezra. "Joe Biden's Promise: a Return to Normalcy." Vox, May 20, 2019. Available at: <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2019/5/20/18631452/joe-biden-2020-presidential-announcement-speech>).

28 Katzenstein, Peter. 2005. *A World of Regions: Asia and Europe in the American Imperium*. Ithaca, United States: Cornell University Press.

29 Cruz, Sebastião Carlos Velasco. 2016. *Linhas Cruzadas sobre as Relações entre os Estados Unidos e a Alemanha*. São Paulo: UNESP. ISBN: 9788539306374.

30 Kundnani, Hans. 2015. "Leaving the West Behind: Germany Looks East". *Foreign Affairs* 94, no. 1 (2015): 108-16. Available at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24483223>.

disagreement with the American-led missile defense project for Europe. The episode of greatest damage to the bilateral relationship in recent years, however, was the disclosure, in 2015, of NSA spying activities on chancellor Angela Merkel.

In the context of the 2008 financial crisis, divergences on the fundamentals of the global financial and economic system between the two countries also became evident. German industrial capitalism, based on social, environmental and cultural values, rejects, to some extent, the Anglo-American financial-speculative model. It was largely due to this model and the strategic partnerships that were established with emerging powers, such as the BRICs, that Germany was able to remain economically stable in light of the Eurozone debt crisis, which followed the 2008 crisis.

One of the pillars of Barack Obama's foreign policy, which is expected to show signs of continuity under Biden – especially with the nomination of Antony Blinken to the post of Secretary of State – was the European and German rapprochement through mega-regional free trade agreements, such as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), the largest mega-regional trade agreement to ever be proposed. The negotiations, however, stagnated during Obama's tenure due to regulatory divergences and strong pressure from civil society, especially in Europe. In this sense, Biden has the reputation of a tough negotiator and should not easily give in to German and European demands if such agreements return to the agenda of transatlantic relations.

Most of all, Germany depends on the Atlantic alliance for its security. As a legacy of the Cold War, Germany still houses approximately 38,000 American troops – the second largest overseas contingent of the United States Armed Forces, only after Japan. The headquarters of the United States European Command (EUCOM) is located in the city of Stuttgart, in the southwestern state of Baden-Württemberg, and coordinates military operations in 51 countries, including all of Europe, Russia, Turkey and Israel.

However, this number has been decreasing in recent years. In 2020, the Trump administration announced a cut of 12,000 troops in Germany following a series of criticisms directed at Berlin for failing to meet NATO's military spending target, set at 2% of GDP, and thus taking advantage of American security in Europe – and this withdrawal process may even be maintained by Biden. As a consequence, Germany also shows signs of independence in this arena, demonstrated, at the domestic level, by the new guidelines adopted by the 2016 White Paper on German Security Policy and the Future of the *Bundeswehr* – which became known in Germany as the 'Munich Consensus' –, and at the regional level for the support of initiatives

towards the integration of European armed forces, alongside Emmanuel Macron's France.

In light of America's recoil in global affairs under Trump, Angela Merkel, who completed 15 years as German chancellor in 2020, was hailed by pundits and analysts as the new 'leader of the free world'<sup>31</sup>. Yet, the liberal international order built between the United States and Europe was already showing clear signs of struggle<sup>32</sup>, and the main challenges towards it have emerged within the West itself, rather than from emerging or contesting powers<sup>33</sup>. Even so, Biden will seek to revive international institutions and regimes, such as the UN, WHO and the Paris Agreement, initiatives that will be welcomed in Berlin.

Part of Trump's political legacy can be reversed through executive orders, the same mechanism used by Trump to reverse policies from the Obama-era. In developed countries, however, state and national interest policies do not change fundamentally with a change in government. At the same time, trumpism and populism in America will not end with Trump's defeat. On the other side of the Atlantic, in 2021 both Germany and Europe will lose one of their most important and long-lasting leaders, when Merkel steps down as German chancellor, a transition that will bring a new element to the transatlantic relations.

## Japan: Bargain within Complex Interdependence

José Miguel Quedi Martins<sup>34</sup>

Luana Margarete Geiger<sup>35</sup>

International Relations in East Asia (Japan, China and South Korea) have some characteristic ingredients. Among the main ones, we can highlight:

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31 See, for example: Sunny Hundal, "Angela Merkel Is Now the Leader of the Free World, Not Donald Trump," *The Independent*, February 1, 2017, <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/angela-merkel-donald-trump-democracy-freedom-press-a7556986.html>.

32 Mearsheimer, John. 2019. "Bound to Fail: The Rise and Fall of the Liberal International Order". *International Security* 43, no. 4 (2019): 7–50. Available at: [https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1162/isec\\_a\\_00342](https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1162/isec_a_00342).

33 Ikenberry, G. John. 2018. "The End of Liberal International Order?". *International Affairs* 94, no. 1 (January 2018): 7–23. Available at: <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iix241>.

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(a) informal ties between government elites - illustrated in interparty diplomacy; (b) The formal agreements between Ministries of Foreign Affairs - expressed, for example, in the ASEAN Regional Forum and the Belt and Road Forum (BRF), which constitute true mechanisms of regional economic governance; (c) The presence of transnational companies as an expression of the integration of production chains of multinationals such as Softbank (Japan), Huawei (China) and Samsung (South Korea). These traits can be identified with what Keohane and Nye<sup>36</sup> call Complex Interdependence. In addition to the aforementioned characteristics, one of the hallmarks of this type of relationship is the low willingness of states to use force among themselves. This does not, however, apply to countries outside this link - such as the US. Thus, in order to make any kind of prediction about the effects of the Biden government on US relations with Japan - and, through this bias, with the region - it is important to understand how Complex Interdependence was established in East Asia.

The efficient (primary) cause of interdependence in East Asia is the Great Crisis. It stems from the untying of the dollar from gold (1971) and its link to oil (1974) - which guaranteed the demand for the American currency. With the unfolding of the Third Industrial Revolution - and, therefore, of the Crisis of Fordism, characteristic of the Second Industrial Revolution - came the segmentation of production and the denationalization of the industrial base. The United States began to export dollars and import goods. In the meantime, Japan was hit by the 1973 Oil Shock. Until that, Japanese growth, while expressive, was not seen as exceptional<sup>37</sup>. At this moment, the real miracle, which eclipsed all others, was the Brazilian. However, after the oil crisis, Japanese growth would become the “miracle” of Asia’s recovery<sup>38</sup>. In short, if the efficient cause of Complex Interdependence in East Asia was the Great Crisis, the overseas overflow of the Japanese subcontracting process<sup>39</sup> has become its material cause.

In its turn, the Japanese surplus with the US and the profits related to the innovations brought up by microelectronics led to an overproduction of capital in Japan. With the appreciation of the yen, resulting from the 1985 Plaza Agreement, the 1986 Real Estate Crisis occurred in Japan - which, in the following year, would infect the US - leading the country to

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36 Keohane, Robert, Nye, Joseph. 2012. *Power and Interdependence*. 4 ed. Glenview: Pearson Education.

37 Arrighi, Giovanni. 1997. *A ilusão do desenvolvimento*. Petrópolis: Editora Vozes.

38 Radelet, S., Sachs, J. 1997. Asia’s Reemergence. *Foreign Affairs*, [s. l.], v. 76, n. 6, p. 44-59, nov./dec. 1997.

39 Arrighi, Giovanni. 1997. *A ilusão do desenvolvimento*. Petrópolis: Editora Vozes.

intensify investments in the region, and accelerate the denationalization of the industrial base. From there came the Newly Industrialized Countries, then identified with the “Asian Tigers” - Hong Kong, South Korea, Singapore and Taiwan. The 1991 Gulf War and the collapse of the Soviet Union created two opportunities that were missed by Japan: the active participation in the reconstruction of ex-Soviet space was compromised by the dispute over the Kuril. In turn, the efforts to participate in the 1991 Gulf War, which would have opened up Japan to access to oil and investment in infrastructure in the Middle East, were thwarted due to a restrictive interpretation of Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution, which understood that the right to self-defense could not be exercised collectively. Junichiro Koizumi, who became prime minister in 2001, also tried to establish a presence in the Middle East, with the 2003 War. In the 90s, as a solution to capital overproduction, financialization was accelerated.

Japanese banks and companies have intensified the transfer of capital to other financial institutions. Then came the 1997 Asian Crisis. And this time, it was China that took the place and role previously played by the Asian Tigers<sup>40</sup>. Ten years later, in 2007, when due to the Surge in Iraq, the Subprime Real Estate Crisis took place in the US - which infected Europe and Asia in 2008 -, China ended up assuming the role of capital exporter - in the form of money, steel industries, and cement<sup>41</sup>. For the first time, Japan had a competitor in the subcontracting system network. Japan's initial reaction was cooperation. This was expressed with the arrival of Yukio Hatoyama, of the DPJ (Democratic Party of Japan) in 2009, with the proposal of the formation of an East Asian Community. More than a Free Trade Zone, it was about electing a security community - hence, Hatoyama's request, made in 2010, for the US to withdraw its bases from the country.

The United States responded with the *Pivot to Asia* in 2011. Although Obama declared it to be an “economic” containment of China, the measures outlined were of a military nature. The then governor of Tokyo, Shintaro Ishihara, proposed to sell the Diaoyu-Senkaku - islands controlled by Japan and claimed by China and Taiwan - giving rise to anti-Japanese disturbances in China (19/08-19/09/2012), who ended up overthrowing the DPJ government in Japan (26/12/2012). Then, Shinzo Abe came to power. It was about taking over the Obama Pivot. However, that is not what happened. The United States has been unable to intensify military pressure on China, due

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40 Visentini, Paulo Fagundes. 2011. *O Dragão Chinês e o Elefante Indiano*. Porto Alegre: Leitura XXI.

41 Cai, Peter. 2017. *Understanding China's Belt and Road Initiative*. Sydney: Lowy Institute for International Policy.

to its commitments in the Middle East and Europe. In the latter, it should be noted that in response to a coup in Ukraine in 2014, Russia annexed Crimea (2015). In the end, what happened to Koizumi happened to Abe. He adhered to the idea of constituting Japan as a global actor through the regional sphere - ultimately, as a mediator between the US and China. In 2017, the rapprochement with China began at the 17th ASEAN meeting. The following year, Trump set tariffs on steel and other Japanese products. The association of these events resulted in an increase in bilateral exchanges between Japan and China.

Japan then adopted Hatoyama's approach: association with China as a form of projection towards Central Asia and the Middle East. So, despite Trump's pressure on the Tokyo G20 (28-29/06/2019) to prevent Japan from joining the Belt and Road Initiative - an ambitious infrastructure plan to interconnect East Asia and Europe - in April 2019, Japan joined the Initiative and became a member of its governance forum - The Belt and Road Forum (25-27/04/2019). Then, it joined the RCEP (15/11/2020), proposed by China, which constituted the largest free trade area in the world - bringing together approximately 1/3 of the world's population and GDP. These Japanese initiatives, to make economic projects vital for China feasible, at a time when the US is fighting a Trade War with Beijing, demand an explanation.

It is an attempt to break with stagnation, paradoxically resulting from the overproduction of capital, which was at the root of the world crises of 1986 and 1997. More than that, it is important to realize that the association between investment and infrastructure - job creation and income - is essential to the success of free trade agreements. It is a matter of replacing the Pact of Elites, of a monetarist nature, which dominated the 1990s and 2000s by a "Social Pact", based on consumption<sup>42</sup>. Therefore, what is at issue in the Japanese attitude is the recognition of the existence of a new ethical content, a new conduct of globalization itself. After all, monetarism is compatible with the destructive phase of the Third Industrial Revolution - when the assets of the previous Industrial Revolution are liquidated to facilitate the eruption and diffusion of the next productive phase - and not with the idea of mass industrial production (which requires consumers).

Trump - alongside Xi Jinping, who launched the BRI in Astana on 09/07/2013<sup>43</sup> - was one of the first to realize this new behavior of globalization.

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42 Bueno, Eduardo Urbanski. 2009. *Paradigmas Técnico-Econômicos, Pactos de Elites e o Sistema Monetário Internacional*. 2009. 92 f. Undergraduate Thesis – International Relations Course, Faculty of Economics, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre, 2009. Available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/10183/21407>. Accessed on: 04 mar. 2016.

43 Xi, Jinping. 2013. *Promote Friendship Between Our People and Work Together to Build a Bright*

It is associated with the diffusion (mass production) of knowledge from the Third Industrial Revolution, in the form of popular consumer applications - e.g. Internet of Things (IoT). The characteristic idiosyncrasies of the former US president prevented the recognition that his project was in line with his time requirements. Trump's plan was based on a massive investment in infrastructure - for which he got the Japanese support, however, not the resources from the US Congress. This was intended to facilitate the transition from a monetarist to an industrial model. In short, to indirectly subsidize the reconstruction of production chains in the US. It is from the association between the effectively global circulation of goods, the required infrastructure to do so, and mass consumption, that emerge the factors that lend to the second phase of the Third Industrial Revolution the content that refurbishes globalization itself. Moreover, Trump's approach to China was a continuation - albeit on a more consistent basis - of Obama's *Pivot*. The only difference is that he tried to use economic - and not military - means to solve economic problems.

Taiwan is the Achilles heel of the Japanese bargain. From this point of view, for Japan, Abe's disease may have been providential. The rise of Yoshihide Suga, a pragmatic politician, who does not belong to any of the party's wings, may allow Japan to distance itself from the provocative policy, in which Taiwan has become central. Abe was never tired of mentioning that his great uncle had been the last Japanese ambassador on the island; and that his brother, Nobuo Kishi - Suga's current Minister of Defense - is a personal friend of Tsai Ing-wen (President of Taiwan). Thus, Suga is an attempt to maintain Abe's bargain without what compromises it: Abe himself. It is supposed that the Japanese know that China will go to war if the island declares its independence. In this case, Japan's position would be irreparably compromised by events whose force and radicality are difficult to predict.

The foundation of Japan's diplomatic bargain with the US and China lies in its potential veto power. With the US, in the security sphere - due to Japan's role for US logistics and air bases -; and with China, in the economic sphere - due to Japan's participation in RCEP and BRF. According to Keohane and Nye<sup>44</sup>, one of the characteristics of Complex Interdependence is precisely this, the absence of a clearly hierarchical foreign policy agenda. Until now, this has benefited Japan, since it could dedicate itself entirely to what was

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*Future*. Astana, Nazarbayev University, 07 Sep. 2013. President Xi Jinping's Speech during official visit to Kazakhstan. Available at: [fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/wjdt\\_665385/zjyh\\_665391/t1078088.shtml](http://fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zjyh_665391/t1078088.shtml). Accessed on: 14 dez. 2020. .

44 Keohane, Robert, Nye, Joseph. 2012. *Power and Interdependence*. 4 ed. Glenview: Pearson Education.

for its partners at the top of the agenda (security or economy). However, after Japan's entry into the BFR (Belt and Road Forum) and RCEP (Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership), its luck was also associated with the success of these initiatives. And any one of them will hardly be successful if there is a conflagration between the US and China. The end of the Great Crisis, which shaped interdependence in East Asia, brings new challenges and opportunities to Japan. The main challenge, as mentioned, is to distance itself from any kind of commitment to Taiwan's independence. And the opportunity is to use Biden's multilateralism to bring the United States into a constructive attitude, compatible with the Second Phase of the Third Industrial Revolution - thereby inserting the United States into the complex interdependence of East Asia.

## India: Redefining an Ascending Alliance

Erik Herejk Ribeiro<sup>45</sup>

In structural terms, the United States' elections do not redefine the trend towards closer ties with India, which has become a key part of the Asia rebalancing strategy. Despite an inconstant history and political divergences, Indo-American relations find a common goal of preventing the transition in the Asian regional order towards a sinocentric system. Joe Biden's victory may bring new elements of diplomatic friction with India, but it should not compromise the cohesion of the main strategic partnership in the Indo-Pacific space.

Historically, Indo-American relations have been labeled as "estranged democracies" since Indian independence<sup>46</sup>. Although governments in Washington have moderately supported decolonization and the Indian nationalist movement, the two countries have always had very different worldviews<sup>47</sup>. Throughout almost the entire Cold War, three domestic and external policies in India diverged from the US: the adoption of an autonomous

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47 Kux, Dennis. 2002. *India and the United States: estranged democracies, 1941-1991*. Forest Grove: University Press of the Pacific.

development model, the non-alignment strategy and, from the 1960s, the advance of its nuclear program<sup>48</sup>. The only period of good relations occurred during the John F. Kennedy and Jawaharlal Nehru governments, which had converging perceptions of threat towards China. Despite this, the US did not provide the expected military assistance during the 1962 Sino-Indian War<sup>49 50</sup>.

Structurally, the strategy of containment against the USSR brought the United States closer to Pakistan and later to China, while India received technological and defense cooperation from the Soviet government. The lowest episode in India-US relations was the American coercion during the 1971 Indo-Pakistani War: the US Navy sent the USS Enterprise aircraft carrier to the Bay of Bengal with the intention of deterring Indian forces, which were assisting the liberation of Bangladesh. Between the late 1970s and the end of the Cold War, successive administrations in India and the US tried to thaw relations, but there were rare points of convergence in any economic or political agenda<sup>51 52</sup>.

In the post-Cold War era, Indo-American relations gained a new perspective from the Indian economic opening in 1991 and from their partnership in information technology, which was symbolized by Bill Gates' visit to India in 1997. However, the nuclear issue continued to hamper their rapprochement, as the US was reluctant to accept the entry of a new power into the elite of the international order. In 1995, the extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the signing of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) forced India to abandon nuclear ambiguity. Under the Atal Vajpayee government (1998-2004), India carried out the Pokhran II test and declared itself a nuclear power. In a letter to Bill Clinton, the Indian Prime Minister justified the initiative due to the nuclearization of Pakistan with crucial assistance from China, which was configured as the main threat to national sovereignty. However, Clinton and most Western countries, in

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48 Nayar, Baldev Raj; Paul, T. V. 2003. *India in the world order: searching for major power status*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

49 Madan, T. 2020. *Fateful triangle: how China shaped U.S. India relations during the Cold War*. Washington: Brookings Institution Press.

50 Sauter, Betina T. 2020. *A procura da Índia pela estabilização regional: a aproximação com a União Soviética até a Guerra de Bangladesh*. Dissertation (Master's in International Strategic Studies) – Post-Graduate Program in International Strategic Studies. Faculty of Economic Sciences, Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre.

51 Kux, Dennis. 2002. *India and the United States: estranged democracies, 1941-1991*. Forest Grove: University Press of the Pacific.

52 Chaudhuri, Rudra. 2014. *Forged in crisis: India and the United States since 1947*. New York: Oxford University Press.

addition to Japan, imposed sanctions on India and Pakistan<sup>53</sup>.

Beyond ideological biases, Indian governments of both political spectrums in the post-Cold War era have had better experiences with the Republican Party in the White House, while Democratic governments generated greater friction in bilateral relations. George W. Bush and Manmohan Singh (2004-2014) are considered the major sponsors of the nuclear and defense agreements signed between 2005 and 2008, spending a large sum of their political capital in the legislative process. Recently, Donald Trump and Narendra Modi (2014-) forged a very close relationship, placing conservative nationalism and the economic and technological boycott of China at the center of their agendas.

In contrast, the Bill Clinton and Barack Obama administrations had difficult periods in relations with India. Clinton's agenda, in addition to working for nuclear non-proliferation, highlighted the Indo-Pakistani conflict and brought up the issue of Kashmir again as an obstacle to approaching New Delhi. Obama, in turn, considered the possibility of a Great Power concert with China (G2) and proved to be an unreliable partner due to failures in conducting crises in Syria, Ukraine and the withdrawal from Afghanistan. The deepening of relations between India and the US during the Obama administration was directly associated with the change of strategic focus with the Asia Pivot in 2012 and China's assertive reaction to this new reality. During this period, then-Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta (2011-2013) declared that India would be the centerpiece of the Pivot and of the overall US strategy for the Indo-Pacific<sup>54</sup>.

Currently, triangular relations between China, India and the United States already define, to a large extent, the geopolitical and economic alignments in the spaces that make up the Indo-Pacific<sup>55 56</sup>. This triangulation took structural contours only with the Chinese rise in the 2000s and has conditioned the Indo-American approach since then. In this context, two policies are worth mentioning: the US-India Defense Technology and Trade Initiative (2012) and the Maritime Quad coalition, which seeks to bring together maritime strategies and naval interoperability between the US, India,

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53 Perkovich, George. 2001. *India's nuclear bomb: the impact on global proliferation*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

54 Pant, Harsh V., Joshi, Yogesh. 2017. Indo-US relations under Modi: the strategic logic underlying the embrace. *International Affairs*, [S.l.], v. 93, n. 1, p. 133 - 146, Jan. 2017.

55 Raja Mohan, C. 2013. *Samudra Manthan: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Indo-Pacific*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

56 Manuel, Anja. 2016. *This Brave New World: India, China and the United States*. New York: Simon & Schuster

Japan and Australia. Over the last decade or so, the United States has provided a large part of platforms and technologies imported by the Indian Navy, while the air force and the army maintained their autonomous partnerships with other countries, such as Russia, Israel and France<sup>57</sup>.

However, in the economic sphere, the United States has not helped India to become a real long-term competitor to China's rise. Despite India's need to accelerate industrialization and endogenization of technology, there is no direct support from Washington or US companies for the Make in India program. Thus, the American strategy for India focuses on two main axes: 1) the deepening of defense cooperation agreements and the sale of military equipment to the Indian Armed Forces; 2) the cooptation of Indian elites through their affluent - and increasingly influential - diaspora in the US, facilitating bilateral business in high value-added digital services.

In conjunctural terms, the effects of the change of command in Washington are not yet clear for India. Prime Minister Modi tacitly expressed his support for Trump's re-election due to ideological proximity and to the mutual interest in containing China, especially in the economic and technological spheres. Joe Biden's victory brought with him the fear that Indian domestic issues, such as the issue of Kashmir and human rights violations, could become objects of dispute among Democrats. Moreover, the resumption of the pro-democracy agenda by the new US government may also have contradictory effects on Modi's foreign policy. On one hand, pragmatism can help to thaw India's relations with Iran, which were heavily affected during the Trump administration. On the other hand, the promise of tougher policies against Russia runs counter to Indian interests.

Despite potential disagreements, Joe Biden has already signaled in his campaign that he will prioritize the strategic partnership with India. First, he chose Kamala Harris as vice president in a symbolic and practical nod to the Indian diaspora. Second, Biden's platform waves to the intention of "making India and the United States the closest nations in the world", citing the role of the new president in the agreements signed during the Obama administration, such as the status of Major Defense Partner conferred in 2016. The Biden platform explicitly mentions the need to work with India to create a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific and to avoid potential threats from China. Biden also mentions issues such as terrorism in South Asia (despite not

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57 Ribeiro, Erik H. 2019. *A Grande Estratégia da Índia: Ascensão de uma nova Grande Potência no século XXI?* Thesis (PhD in International Strategic Studies) – Post-Graduate Program in International Strategic Studies. Faculty of Economic Sciences, Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre, 2019.

citing Pakistan) and the resumption of the Paris Agreement<sup>58</sup>. Another topic of relevance to New Delhi that should be facilitated by the Biden government is the issue of residence visas for Indian skilled workers in the United States.

In sum, regardless of the government's platform in the United States, India will remain a strategic priority due to the triangulation with China. The Modi government, despite its ideological preference for Trump, may have its strategic interests facilitated by Washington's new policies. The return of the United States to the multilateral agenda is a good sign for India, which will be reintroduced to the UN Security Council in 2021 and, in the following year, will occupy the presidency of the G20. It remains to be seen whether Biden will also move forward on the economic and technological cooperation agenda with India, especially in the context of projected recession and low growth for both countries in the coming years.

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<sup>58</sup> Biden-Harris. 2020. Joe Biden's Agenda for the Indian American Community. *Biden-Harris*, Online, 2020. Available at: <<https://joebiden.com/indian-americans/>>. Accessed on nov. 20. 2020.