

EDITOR'S NOTE

In the second half of 2023, global tensions escalated rapidly, shaking certainties, undermining many of the narratives established throughout neoliberal globalization, and generating a new wave of instability in the Middle East. Hamas's attack on Israeli territory in the peripheral region of Gaza sparked a high-intensity military reaction against the urban enclave. The result was a serious humanitarian crisis and a radical alteration of the region's geopolitical landscape, with the eruption of new conflicts, tensions, and realignments. The deepening competition between old and new powers on a global scale demonstrates a pattern of unstable multi-vector politics. The prolonged crisis may be reaching the limits of a systemic rupture if some sort of agreement is not achieved in the short term.

All of this unfolds within the context of absolute uncertainty surrounding the Russo-Ukrainian conflict and the escalating tensions between China and the United States in East Asia. The Ukrainian counteroffensive did not yield military results – it only caused wear and tear on the Zelensky government, whose political and material external supports are in decline. This is especially the case in the United States, where Joe Biden seeks re-election in 2024 amid growing difficulties. Internal fractures and sporadic reactions against Russia have not altered the military status-quo. Strangely, the European Union is making a financial effort to assist Ukraine, while social protests and farmer protests exacerbate the internal political balance and the decline of the Welfare State.

Add to this the surprising geopolitical shift in the Francophone Sahel region and the Horn of Africa. There is the protagonism of nationalist governments distancing themselves from France and approaching Russia. Moreover, the African system of states is undergoing rapid change, with an evolution that many deemed impossible just a few years ago. The cleavage that marks American and European societies also occurs in Brazil and in Spanish-speaking countries. Fluid alliances and shifting rivalries have as their backdrop economic stagnation and technological transition, with profound social impacts. The instability that existed before the covid-19 pandemic has taken on the characteristics of chaotic geopolitics, with absolute unpredictability.

This issue of AUSTRAL: *Brazilian Journal of Strategy and International*

Relations features articles from scholars from Brazil, the United States, Indonesia, and Russia. The first article offers an interesting critique of the concept of the Global South, forged in the Northern Hemisphere to eliminate that of the Third World, proposing instead the concept of Geopolitical South. The second analyses the decline of dollar hegemony and the advent of a multipolar world, while the third article addresses contemporary African policy of the United Kingdom. The fourth article in this issue explores the role of Turkey in Sweden's accession to NATO, followed by a fifth paper analysing the foreign policy of the Barack Obama administration. Finally, the seventh article of this issue explores the international role of the Confucius Institute, while the last one provides a comparison between the foreign policies of Argentine President Mauricio Macri and Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro.

This number also features a special note on the legacy of Ambassador Samuel Pinheiro Guimarães (1939-2024) and his interaction with the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS) and the Brazilian Centre for Strategy and International Relations (NERINT) for the establishment of the area of International Relations. His passing represents a great loss, both for diplomacy and academia. The issue concludes with a book review written by Professor José Miguel Quedi Martins.

The perspective of authors from the Geopolitical South enriches academic and strategic perception regarding the topics analysed, materializing AUSTRAL's foundational and ongoing objectives. This is crucial at a time when the global scenario is evolving into a sum of conflicts and tensions, which have already led to military escalation and strong unpredictability. More than ever, it is necessary for academia to proceed with an urgent critical-realistic analysis, setting aside post-modern approaches. As the Brazilian essayist Millôr Fernandes once said, "today, an optimist is someone who is not sure of the future".

This publication was possible thanks to the Research Office at UFRGS through the Support Program for Journal Editing (PAEP), as well as the entire team of editors and translators, in particular Editorial Assistants Igor Estima Sardo and João Pedro Lopes Gonçalves, with the collaboration of Felipe Werner Samuel. We also thank our qualified body of reviewers and Professor Cristina Soreanu Pecequilo for revising the translations. The teamwork of researchers from NERINT/UFRGS has allowed us to maintain the regularity and quality of AUSTRAL.

Disclaimer: AUSTRAL prioritises British English as the standard form of written English. However, some translations may be presented in American English.

TRIBUTE TO SAMUEL PINHEIRO GUIMARÃES

Paulo Fagundes Visentini

Ambassador Samuel Pinheiro Guimarães (1939-2024) was an extremely courageous diplomat and an important advocate for Brazil's national interests during the enthusiastic wave of neoliberal globalization. In doing so, he dared to cross institutional and corporate boundaries. His involvement with UFRGS began in 1995 when he assumed the presidency of the Institute of International Relations Research (IPRI), an entity linked to the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In collaboration with academia, he organised seminars, conducted research, and published seminal works, inspiring scholars who were bewildered by the prevailing narrative at the time. In 1999, he collaborated on our initiative to establish the Brazilian Centre for Strategy and International Relations (NERINT) within the Latin American Institute of Advanced Studies (ILEA) at UFRGS. That same year, the International Relations and Integration Collection, published by the university press, released the first edition of his emblematic work *Five Hundred Years of Periphery* (*Quinhentos Anos de Periferia*, available only in Portuguese), co-edited by Contraponto, which left a mark on Brazilian political-diplomatic thought.

Due to his activism in warning about the risks posed by the implementation of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) to the Brazilian economy and sovereignty, he was removed from his position in 2001. However, in 2003, he assumed the position of Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MRE), serving as the right-hand man of Ambassador Celso Amorim in the first Lula administration. While the Chancellor travelled the world, Guimarães coordinated and organised, motivating many and challenging others, both in Brazil and abroad. His activities during this period deepened relations with academia and society. As he stated, "we need to train Brazilian specialists in the knowledge of other regions of the world." And indeed, the seed was planted, as our university has produced numerous specialists in the field of International Relations since then.

In positions of power and outside of them, he consistently maintained his attitude, friendship, and support for academic initiatives, whether institutional or personal. Unfortunately, despite our efforts, he did not write his memoirs. Always engaged in current agendas, he considered this less relevant. This was a mistake because the foreign policy, in which he played

a leading role, had a systemic impact, and provoked reactions far beyond our borders. He was a man of the backstage and could have clarified many controversial issues, which are now analysed based on ideological narratives. This is particularly pertinent at a time when the Brazilian national question appears confusing to both Greeks and Trojans.

Translated by Guilherme Thudium.