

PRESENTATION

*Celso Amorim*¹

Austral: Brazilian Journal of Strategy & International Relations has arrived at a good time. In a multipolar world whose contours are being outlined at a sometimes disconcerting pace, it's necessary to keep up with the reflection on the international reality. Redefining premises, updating parameters and reviewing judgments – all of that is the order of the day. Traditional thinking on International Relations is an open field to this work. If the past decade has come to an end with the questioning of a set of propositions about the global economy, the decade that is beginning may witness innovation on ways of thinking about international politics.

Classic concepts must be reformulated in order to explain phenomena of unprecedented type and reach. Without detriment to the commitment with descriptive objectivity, the normative quality of the narratives on the functioning of the international reality will be under permanent scrutiny. Peace and war, dialogue and force, persuasion and influence, among others, compose the constellation of ideas in which this both theoretical and practical debate will take place. And will be necessary to take part in it from one's own perspective. The timely choice of the name of this Journal, *Austral*, confirms its identification with that purpose.

One's own, but not univocal perspective. The plurality of ideas and concepts, a sign of solid reflection, is the best starting point to think, through our perspective, about the world order.

With its democracy already consolidated and its economy growing, Brazil has known how to affirm an independent point of view on the global order in the beginning of the 21th century. In terms of foreign policy, we showed that solidarity can reinforce the national interest and that the South can have a constructive and essential role on conformation of the multipolar order.

That didn't happen softly and without contestation. As every paradigm break, the rupture with pre-conceived ideas has caused controversy and generated critics, some less justified than others. Nowadays however even those who criticized several of the adopted positions have to recognize Brazil's unprecedented position in

¹ Defense Minister and former Minister of Foreign Relations of Brazil (austral@ufrgs.br)

the international scenario. And the role of foreign policy in that rise has been highlighted by analysts all over the world.

Actions such as the ones Brazil adopted in the negotiations of the FTAA and the WTO, the impetus given to South-American integration, the approximation with Africa, the training of groups such as the BRICS and IBSA, as well as the fearless position on topics as the Middle East and the search for a peaceful solution to the question of Iran's nuclear program, turned our country into a respected actor, whose participation on the issue is increasingly requested.

The return of the defense topic to the national agenda in the last few years underpins this position. I usually say that a peaceful country is not a synonym of a defenseless country. With the National Defense Strategy, Brazil accepted the demanding and irreplaceable task of providing its own means of defense. By strengthening them, Brazil not only reduces its vulnerabilities in the face of potential threats in an increasingly unstable international scenario, but also contributes to the reinforcement of organic multipolarity, which must be the base of a safest and fairer world governance.

By approaching strategic and security topics, *Austral* will contribute to further develop reflection on these and others issues of great value to foreign policy, defense and Brazil's development.

Let the debate begin!

* This article was translated by Gabriela Perin and revised by Isadora Loreto da Silveira.