

EDITOR'S NOTE

Special Dossier: Security and Defense in South America

It is with great satisfaction that we bring to the public the Special Dossier *Security and Defence in South America*, coordinated by professors Rafael Villa and Juliana Viggiano, renowned academics in the field of Defence Studies. This is the result of an extensive research carried out in the framework of CAPES' "Pró-Defesa" Notice by a group of researchers led by Professor Villa, composing a set of ten articles and complemented by two others of similar themes that were aggregated by the Editorial Board of *AUSTRAL: Brazilian Journal of Strategy & International Relations*.

Due to Brazil's strategic position vis-a-vis its regional environment (which also encompasses the South Atlantic ocean), the internal political instability of the states of the region and the so-called non-traditional threats, the challenge of South American integration is central to Brazil's long term strategy. In this sense, one of NERINT's research proposals, linked to the line of research "Brazil's Grand Strategy for the 21st Century", seeks precisely to analyse the political, economic and security opportunities and challenges in the South American strategic sphere.

Thus, this Special Edition of *AUSTRAL: Brazilian Journal of Strategy & International Relations* comes up against the backdrop of a series of setbacks that these processes have been experiencing in recent times. Far from being overtaken by recent events, the Dossier describes and analyses, with theoretical and methodological rigor, the complex process of building regional security cooperation in South America. Refluxes of this kind occur periodically, but the political reality also eventually creates conditions for the resumption of similar projects in relatively short periods of time.

The Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) and the Council of South American Defence (CDS), despite their weaknesses and without ideological appropriations, have promoted an institutional framework that is essential to Brazil's diplomatic and defence policies. Recent redefinitions, such as the abandonment of Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Peru and Paraguay, however, put the organisation at risk of obsolescence, fundamentally damaging any perspective of deepening cooperation in the area of Defence.

The primordial objectives of the CDS were the gathering and regionalisation of consensus on Security and Defence in South America through three main foundations: dialogue, cooperation and political concertation. As explained by Prof. Rafael Villa during the 10th Meeting of the Brazilian Association of Defence Studies (ABED), held in September 2018 at the University of São Paulo (USP), three current dynamics profoundly alter this process of cooperation in the continent: (1) the “Venezuela factor” and the spillover of the Venezuelan economic, political and social crises; (2) the “Colombia factor”, which suspended its participation in the organisation and joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) as a “global partner”; and (3) the “Mercosur factor”, where most countries experienced the end of the “pink wave” and the return of neoliberal governments, economic crises and intense polarisation and judicialisation of politics. All four of its current full member-states suspended their participation in UNASUR in April 2018.

The papers that compose this Dossier cover a wide range of topics, such as the tabulation of South American navies, the expenditures of the local Armed Forces, regional cooperation in public security and current Brazilian policies in light of terrorist threats. The direct military presence of European powers in the region (French Guiana and Malvinas), the military modernisation in South America and the role of Russia, China and South Korea are discussed next. Concluding the Dossier, the mobilisation of the Industrial Defence Base in South America, the geopolitics of South American cyberspace and the civil-military relationship in the ambit of Peacekeeping Missions are also discussed by the authors of the Dossier, specialists of several Brazilian institutions. Finally, an article on Brazil's Defence Industry and an interesting comparison between Costa Rica and Ecuador regarding the perception of external threat were added to this thematic edition.

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