

## EDITOR'S NOTE

Paulo Fagundes Visentini<sup>1</sup>

Two years ago, our editorial was entitled *Brazil, the weakest link of the BRICS?* (#4), and last year it was named *The Economic War and the silence of the Academy* (#6). For some readers, they seemed to be exaggerated analyses. However, the extreme political polarization of the Brazilian elections and the subsequent accelerated anti-corruption processes of “*Operação Lava Jato*” (*Operation Car Wash*), on the one hand, and the fast financial-economic and diplomatic-military deterioration of international relations, on the other, show that such editorials made sense.

The Brazilian opposition groups (and their external allies), in fact, did not accept the fourth consecutive defeat at the polls in 2014 and seek, through various means, to question the government's legitimacy. The large internationalized Brazilian companies, the energy and the science and technology sectors have been largely affected, which partially explains the fragile economic situation. Externally, the opposition seems to make an effort to ward off South American integration, South-South cooperation and the participation in the BRICS in Brazilian diplomatic agenda.

As the Brazilian currency and the Chinese stock markets suffer from speculative attacks, Russia is still under pressure due to European and US sanctions, also hindering the preparation of the 2018 Soccer World Cup in that country. On the other hand, in Europe, the issue on the Ukrainian conflict and the Greek crisis is far secondary on the agenda now. The flow of refugees, which crossed the Mediterranean Sea, from the ungoverned Libya to Italy, was surpassed by others even more expressive. Syrians, Afghans and others walk in massive waves through the Balkans, heading to Germany and other nations. Many rules of the European Union appear to be suspended in a regressive movement. And Hungary, which in 1989 demolished the fence

---

<sup>1</sup> Professor of International Relations at Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul. PhD in Economic History, Universidade de São Paulo. Director of the Brazilian Centre for Strategy and International Relations (NERINT). E-mail: paulovi@ufrgs.br.

that separated it from the “free world”, hastily built another one to keep out the refugees.

Intervention and support for opposition movements in Iraq, Libya and Syria is one of the most significant factors that originated the current migration problems. The arrival of hundreds of thousands of people in the region, who the West classified as victims, became a human tsunami during the summer holidays in the northern hemisphere. Europe then found itself without a response and could not prevent their arrival or send them back. Even the internal borders of the European Union started to be monitored, an unprecedented event in half a century. It is strangely surprising that Europe did not expect such consequences and have no idea what to do to solve the problem.

More than isolated events, these are part of a systemic process. To address such questions, in this edition we have, among others, articles from former Minister Celso Amorim, about the scenario in the defense area, the researcher Steven Colatrella, on the theoretical foundations of the world economy and a virtual Third World War, added to analyses regarding the Brazilian Navy (João Roberto Martins Filho), the significance of the 60th anniversary of the Bandung Conference (Analúcia Pereira and Klei Medeiros), the foreign policy of Angola (Igor Castellano) and the innovative Diplomacy of Pope Francis (Anna Carletti), and other important considerations.

\* \* \*

We appreciate the sponsorship of the Office of Research of the Deanship of UFRGS, through the Support Program for Journal Editing (PAEP) for translation, editing and printing, as well as the whole team who worked on the editing and translation, particularly assistant editors, Vitória Gonzalez and Isadora Coutinho. We are also grateful to the Professor Cristina Soreanu Pecequilo for the revision of the English versions. And we inform with satisfaction that AUSTRAL journal renewed its Editorial Team, adding prestigious names, committed to the project, starting a new phase.