

EDITOR'S NOTE

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The Axes of World Power

The thirteenth edition of Austral is launched at a very special moment, namely the affiliation of the Brazilian Centre for Strategy and International Relations/NERINT to the Center for International Studies on Government-CE-GOV/UFRGS and the opening of the allusive programming for the twentieth anniversary of NERINT, that will take place in August 2019. The first Centre for International Studies in the South of Brazil, NERINT became a reference for its academic seriousness and independent posture for two decades.

The first initiative will be the publication of a special issue (July-December 2018) with a Dossier organized by Professors Juliana Viggiano and Rafael Duarte Villa on *Security and Defense in South America*, within the framework of the Pro-Defense Call for Proposals of the Pandiá Calógeras Institute of the Ministry of Defense of Brazil and the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development of Brazil (CNPq). The development of the Security and Defense theme is a trend of Austral: Brazilian Journal of Strategy and International Relations, NERINT, as well as of the Post-Graduate Program in International Strategic Studies at UFRGS.

This inflection is justified by the growth of international tensions and uncertainties, in a multidimensional crisis, which lack academic and theoretical treatment. The reflections on this theme allow a deeper classification of the axes of world power, which are emerging in the context of the crisis and the American actions, which dismantle the existing multilateral system.

There are many ways to classify the powers and other nations, but here the proposed classification accounts the fracture lines that are forming and the alliances that can emerge from this reality. In this context, the discourse that appears in several sectors of the Brazilian State and society is paradoxical (and in many other nations). It looks like as if the Cold War was

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reborn, against the logic, arguments and social evidence of the opposite, because it depended on the schism of capitalism versus socialism, which may survive only on residual form in small nations. Rivalries today have an economic character and, in part, geopolitical.

The following interpretive proposal emerged from research and dialogue with the academia, the diplomacy, the media and the Armed Forces, as well as other sectors. It demonstrates a reality around which politics will show its rationality or irrationality. The first group of international politics is united in the *Anglo-Saxon military-rentier axis*: the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and, tangentially, Israel. These are the hegemonic nations that have military, diplomatic, financial, technological, intelligence and communications resources. Being in the post-industrial rentier phase, they live off the resources of the other nations, employing the means mentioned above.

The second is the *industrially developed axis* of the European Union, Japan and the Asian Tigers. With an advanced productive industrial capitalism and a high level of life of its populations, it differs from the first, because this group lacks the traditional power resources, like the military, and full sovereignty. They were protected during the Cold War, but today the situation is uncertain and tensions with the former axis are growing. Much of what will come depends on the political attitude that is going to be adopted by relevant nations of the axis, such as Germany and Japan, the defeated of World War II.

The third is the *emerging industrial axis*, integrated by the major BRICS nations, especially China and Russia, as well as Turkey and Iran, where State participation is crucial. This is what is called the semi-periphery, the explicit target of Donald Trump's US and his America First. Like the previous axis, its greatest desire is to avoid an armed conflict of global dimensions and to maintain its economic development. Although they have the resources to defend themselves, they cannot project power and depend on the attitude of the second axis.

Finally, the fourth is the *agrarian-mineral and peripheral human axis*, integrated by the middle and small nations of Latin America, Africa and geographical Asia (which includes the Middle East). They have abundant human, agricultural, or mineral resources (including energy), but do not have military capability or diplomatic articulation, tending to act in a fragmented way as a disputed zone by the other axis. Brazil and South Africa, apparently absorbed by their domestic political agendas, risk becoming part of this group.

In this context, this edition brings the contribution of authors from Russia, Kazakhstan, Nigeria and India, as well as of several Brazilian scholars. It opens with a theoretical discussion on the relevant concept of semi-periph-

ery, two articles on Africa (Zuma's fall and the role of the African Union in the construction of the state on the continent) and three on the Middle East (Turkey's "Ottomanism", the problem of Syrian refugees and Islamic terrorism for the United States, and a thought-provoking comparison between Lula's foreign policy for the Middle East and Ahmadinejad's for South America).

Then there are three articles on Asia (the Indian perception of the Chinese OBOR initiative, the presence of China and India in Antarctica, and post-Nehru Indian diplomacy). Closing the edition there is an article about the impact of the national political changes in Mercosur's framework, another on the tariff and technical measures on international trade and, finally, in the area of the International Law, about the Institute of International Defense.

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