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Joining the Club: Lula and the End of Periphery for Brazil*

1. Introduction

Brazil's insertion in the global political economy has usually been painted as a situation of "periphery", perhaps most vividly, although he was not writing exclusively about Brazil, by Samuel Pinheiro Guimarães, who is now Secretary General of Itamaraty and whose "500 years of periphery" is now required reading for incoming Brazilian diplomats (Guimarães 2001). From that standpoint, Brazil's peripheral international status is not understood as a situation of "mere" marginality but instead as the continuing result of a dynamic relationship between a centre that benefits from its asymmetric character and works at perpetuating it. In that perspective, Brazil's foreign policy is primarily reactive and essentially defensive.

My starting point is different. Brazil's peripheral status in the world for most of its history, and for the purpose of this paper, specifically since WWII, is accepted. It is understood, however, as a situation of mutual irrelevance: Brazil has had a superficial insertion in the global political economy and in the global strategic landscape. This has meant that, all the talk about dependency notwithstanding, the world has had relatively little bearing on Brazil. Its political and economic disasters as well as its successes have been essentially of its

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own making. Domestic factors, in other words, have been the main determinant of Brazilian foreign policy, they have had the most influence on the definition of the interests that were defended and promoted, on the resources mobilized for that purpose, and on the way in which that policy was implemented. Brazil's insertion in the world is now changing because Brazil is.

The argument of this paper is straightforward: Brazil's peripheral status is ending, in part because the world is becoming more relevant to its fate, but mostly because Brazil has become more appealing to the world, particularly to its dominant powers, as a result of its consolidation as a stable, democratic and liberal power. While the country's diplomacy has always been extremely competent and while it has also been increasingly assertive, particularly since the mid-1980s, a number of domestic factors had severely constrained it. Chief among those, Brazil's political system remained in transition, the fundamental direction of its economic policy and the fate of its economic adjustment were still uncertain and its international image was still marred by dramatic social inequities. On all three counts, the elections and the months that followed changed the equation.

This domestic dynamic is outlined in the following section. An overview of Lula's foreign policies follows, and their impact are assessed in a third part.

2. The Election of Lula and Brazilian Foreign Policy

2.1 Democratic Consolidation

A classic test of democratic consolidation is a real change in governing authorities. This is one of the reason why political scientists for a long time questioned the depth of democratic roots in Japan where one party, the LDP, ruled essentially unopposed for some forty years. The test is particularly significant when a large ideological distance has traditionally separated contending forces, for instance when conservative or liberal parties are replaced by socialist or communist ones. When such a change takes place without significant upheaval, there are extremely sound reasons to conclude that a political consensus exists regarding the legitimacy of the political institutions of the country. This is why the return of the Peronists to power was so important in Argentina, and why the electoral success of the FMLN and the vic-

tories of the Liberals, of the PAN and of the Frente Amplio were so significant in El Salvador, Nicaragua, Mexico and Uruguay. This is also why doubts will be justified about Guatemala until the Left wins something significant, and about Venezuela until Chavez and his party lose one election, if only to win the next one.

Such a fundamental change is the huge step forward that Brazil took in 2002. The victory of Lula and the spectacular success of the PT in congressional elections clearly demonstrated that Brazil's democracy was sound and that its various political forces, its military, and its economic elites were willing to let clean elections rule the day. Obviously, the process was well under way and in fact, the commitment of Brazilian elites to democratic arrangements had been successfully tested a number of times, beginning with the smooth passage to José Sarney, following the death of Tancredo Neves, and particularly on the occasion of the resignation of Fernando Collor de Mello. The test of ideological alternance, however, was still to be passed as the same political coalition, the *Centrão*, had basically been in power since the return to civilian rule, in 1985.

The institutional soundness demonstrated in 2002 has a number of meanings that are relevant for Brazil's foreign policy. Some are absolute: the country's foreign policy can claim a degree of legitimacy, both domestic and international, that were simply out of reach during the authoritarian period. In addition, the democratic consensus ensures a degree of political stability that gives credibility to the country's international commitment. Other implications are relative: in South America, and more broadly, in Latin America and the Caribbean, this kind of political stability is increasingly uncommon, and the fact that it is to be found in the largest and most powerful country of the region readily confers to Brazil the status of a political and strategic anchor.

2.2 (Neo-)Liberal Consolidation

In its specifics, the liberal economic cookbook remains highly contentious (Naim 2000). Feminist, post-colonial and post-Marxist academics have raised numerous and sometimes compelling doubts about its assumptions and theoretical claims, while in the streets, during international meetings and People's Summits, thousands have denounced its practical implications. In global policy circles, however, and in

national central banks and finance departments the world over, there is little debate about the broad contours of a “sound” economic policy, and these contours are unmistakably liberal or, more precisely, neo-liberal: fiscal equilibrium, low inflation, open markets, secure property rights and an independent central bank – formally if possible, informally if necessary (Yusuf/Stiglitz 2001; Bhalla 2002). It is not that all the governments in the world are abiding by these rules and requirements, but few of the “delinquents” present their current policies as anything but a “state of exception”, promising to correct their faults as soon as the conditions permit.

The liberal “grammar” also dominates global trade regimes and multilateral institutions, and a credible commitment to broadly respect its rules is a *sine qua non* to joining those regimes or to engaging with its major players. The global economic game, in other words, is governed according to a liberal rules book, and the only way to join it is to accept its dictates.

This clearly was the previous government’s view. Cardoso, ever since he introduced the Real Plan as Itamar Franco’s finance minister, played the game and he was widely praised for doing so. In many ways, he was also very successful, launching the first period of economic stability that Brazil had known in a generation.

Brazil’s long-term commitment to this outlook remained in doubt, however, both domestically and internationally, for very simple reasons: the most powerful and prestigious left-wing party in Latin America, the PT, was a strong critic of the neo-liberal consensus, everybody knew that it would be a very credible contender to the Presidency and, undoubtedly, that it would remain a powerful player in the Brazilian congress. Logically, as the electoral campaign progressed in the summer and fall of 2002, and as Lula stayed ahead in the polls, a mild panic set in, capital started flowing out, and the Real went into a minor tailspin (Williamson 2002).

Lula’s team was quick to present itself as a credible player, assuring private and multilateral bankers that a PT government would service its debt, guaranteeing the domestic private sector of its commitment to fiscal discipline and “moderation” and, as further proof of “credibility”, supporting publicly the Cardoso government’s agreement with the International Monetary Fund. In the end Lula won, the PT became even more powerful in Congress, but the first two years of

the new regime have been the story of the consolidation of economic orthodoxy. An analysis of that policy lies beyond the scope of this paper, but a few landmarks are worth mentioning: in the first session of the new Congress, the government successfully articulated a coalition to block an – admittedly demagogic – attempt to raise the minimum salary; the IMF agreement was renewed by the government and monetary and fiscal policies remain to this day extremely restrictive; a well-known international banker and card-carrying member of Cardoso's PSDB, Henrique Meireles, was chosen to head the Central Bank; the Fiscal Responsibility Law, which heavily constrains the government's spending ability, was maintained; and, in the face of growing restiveness on the part of the Left of the Workers' Party, radical members of its deputation in Congress were condemned as irresponsible and then expelled altogether from the party.

If there is a consensus in the public and academic discussion about Brazil, in fact, it regards the surprising conversion of the PT in power to neo-liberalism. The agreement is universal: from the sad musings of Fernando Gabeira about his "having dreamed the wrong dream", to the accolades of the IMF (2005);¹ from the spite of the PT's Left, of the *Movimento dos Sem Terras*, and of North American radical academics about Lula's treason (Petras 2005; Chossudovsky 2003), to the Financial Times Group's Direct Investment magazine's selection of Lula as its "Personality of the Year" for 2004. Wherever one looks, moreover, there is nothing in the country's economic policy to challenge the Right's praise or, for that matter, the Left's curses.

This "turn" of the PT, and this non-turn of the government's economic policy, has a number of significant implications for Brazil's foreign policy. The first one is that the country's economic stability has been bolstered, with the fall 2002 panic quickly evaporating as the country went from moderate growth but total macro-economic stability in 2003, to remarkable growth and continuing stability in 2004. If anything, the initial lack of growth further contributed to the credibility of the government's commitment to fiscal discipline. In the context

1 "Directors welcomed Brazil's impressive economic achievements over the last two years, and the remarkable track record of performance under the Stand-By Arrangement, which reflected the authorities' continued pursuit of strong macro-economic policies and steady progress with structural reforms" (IMF 2005: 2). Italics are mine.

of the crisis in Argentina and Uruguay and of the continuing uncertainty in Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela, this makes Brazil a haven of tranquillity. The global prestige of the PT and of Lula, in particular, also confer a massive credibility to the “TINA” (“There Is No Alternative”) crowd, which quickly reacted by bringing Brazil on board, from Davos to Washington. The doubts about Brazil’s commitment to the neo-liberal recipe book have disappeared as the policy, but also the message, became as clear as could be: in an article written barely one year into Lula’s mandate, Paulo Roberto de Almeida, referring to the competing World Social and World Economic fora, wrote “Porto Alegre Sim; Davos Não” (Almeida 2004), although Lula was the first world leader to go to both summits. The year after, Lula chose Davos and skipped Porto Alegre and, a year later, he did not show up either in Mumbai, where the social summit had moved. What message could be crisper?

2.3 The “right” (Left) Image

The third impact of Lula’s election is more immaterial. It has to do with the credibility *in the North* of Brazil’s claim to be a voice for the global South and the promoter of a more equitable international distribution of wealth and power. Traditionally, it must be emphasized, Brazil has been somewhat lukewarm about assuming such a stand. Neither in the 1950s nor later did the country join the Non-Aligned Movement and its traditionally independent foreign policy was meant to be so in relations both to the superpowers and to the so-called Third World. This “autonomous insertion” (Vigevani/Cepaluni 2007) was perhaps most vivid under Fernando Collor de Melo who, at the beginning of the 1990s, explicitly sought to symbolically attach Brazil to the First World (Hirst/Pinheiro 1995; Cervo 2005).

Collor’s resounding failure, both political and economic, somewhat discredited that “First World” stand. Yet the project of Brazil’s reinventing itself as a “Southern” voice – the “Third world” having disappeared along with the Second – needed to overcome a number of obstacles. Under Cardoso, and even leaving aside the shallow historical roots of such an identity, the sophisticated diplomat-intellectuals of Itamaraty and their multilingual, PhD-holding aristocratic President could hardly pose as the embodiment of the wretched of the earth. This was especially problematic given the massive social and racial

inequities that plague Brazil and make their worldly, wealthy and white foreign service poorly representative of a country that remains largely poor and *mulato*.

From that standpoint, the election of Lula and his strong involvement in foreign policy effectively opened up a whole new symbolic repertoire for Brazil (Burgess 2005). Progressive global social stands were natural for him and he looked the part. His waging the “Fome Zero” (“Zero Hunger”) campaign both domestically and globally is the best expression of Brazil’s claim to speak and work for the poor and for the South. The fact that Lula set up a double-headed foreign policy machinery, imposing Marco Aurelio Garcia, a party activist, on the Itamaraty establishment, only reinforced the credibility of a progressive global agenda that the latter had scarcely identified with in the past.

The stage was set, in sum, for a vastly different diplomacy.

3. Lula’s Foreign Policies

This overview organizes Brazil’s activities in three broad categories: trade, security and, for lack of a better word, “politics”, by which I mean that part of Brazilian foreign policy that is directed to global governance. The issues I will discuss under that heading regard primarily but not exclusively the UN.

A huge caveat is in order before starting this overview. As Paulo Roberto de Almeida recently pointed out (Almeida 2004), to characterize Lula’s foreign policy after barely two years is a perilous exercise and if the descriptive part of what follows is pretty sound, the interpretations I propose must be considered tentative.

3.1 Trade: Playing the Game and Winning

It is certainly on the trade front that Brazil has made its most spectacular gains in recent years. These were made both within existing regimes (the WTO) and in the negotiations to expand those (the Doha Round) or to establish significant new ones (FTAA, EU-Mercosur).

In its trade policy, Brazil’s current objectives are quite straightforward: getting as much as possible in the areas where the country is already most competitive (i.e. primarily agriculture), and giving as little as possible in those where the cost of adaptation – short, medium

or long-term – would be most severe, i.e. primarily in agriculture and possibly in services. In its general contours, this strategy is no different from that of the vast majority of WTO members: in the liberal age, paradoxically, mercantilism rules trade policy.

These objectives have been pursued extremely effectively and, by any standards, Brazil's performance on the global trade scene over the last few years has been extraordinary and has made the country a central and highly visible player, out of all proportion to its still limited weight in global trade.

Two of the highest points of recent years involved the use of the regime itself against those who had designed and, until now, ruled it, namely the US and the EU. Brazil's challenge of the US government's subsidies to cotton production and of the European Union's support for its sugar producers were received and accepted by the World Trade Organization's dispute resolution mechanism and they survived appeals (WTO 2005a; 2005b). While the ultimate outcome of the disputes, which are now in the hands of the US and the EU, is uncertain, the decisions represent a massive victory for agricultural exporters from Southern countries, on substance and on principles, and for the WTO itself, on legitimacy.

In addition to these clear victories, Brazil has also made effective use of the WTO in its ongoing dispute with Canada regarding subsidies to their respective aircraft manufacturers. While the outcome, in this case, is less clear cut, as both countries' programs were faulted and as both were also allowed to impose tariff compensations (Goldstein/McGuire 2004), the process as such showed that Brazil could exploit existing rules very much to its advantage.

Such effective use of the WTO by Brazil has not been limited to disputes with rich northern countries. In fact, most of Brazil's requests to the WTO, which concerned anti-dumping investigations, involved products from developing countries, overwhelmingly China and to a lesser extent India, but also South Africa and even Mexico and Venezuela (WTO 2004: 64). These are not introduced by the government, arising instead from private companies' complaints, but they imply that the Brazilian private sector is now also able to fully exploit the regime. The frequency of those complaints has changed little under the new government as the latter, except recently and somewhat indirectly in the very peculiar case of China – which is discussed below –

does not seem to be discouraging these practices, even when they are directed to Southern partners.

While Brazil has on the one hand done quite well under the “old” regime, it has nonetheless contested some of its dispositions, particularly in two broad areas. The first is intellectual property rights, where the TRIPS agreement has enshrined a distribution of guarantees that puts low-tech countries in an extremely disadvantageous position. The other is agriculture, where protectionism and subsidies dominate existing policies.

Brazil’s strategy on both these cases, which has not changed fundamentally with the new government, has been primarily political. On property rights, the government has challenged the very legitimacy of the existing regime and its impact on the poorest countries, particularly regarding anti-retroviral drugs. In concrete terms, Brazil has been a key player, along with South Africa, in the ultimately successful fight against brand name drug companies’ attempts to limit the rights of governments to impose compulsory licensing, something Brazil has done under Cardoso, and something it continues to do (CIPR 2002: 11-56).

On agriculture, aside from the full use of the prerogatives enshrined in the Marrakech agreement, Brazil has set up and led, alone or with key allies, such as India, a range of veto coalitions that were able to basically disable trade negotiation processes that did not involve substantive concessions on protection or subsidies from the United States or the EU. Given the unwillingness of the latter – or their political inability – to make such concessions, this strategy has contributed to the failure of the Cancun meeting of the WTO and to the paralysis of the Doha Round of global trade negotiations (Jank/Monteiro Jales 2004). It has also led to the stalling of the FTAA process, and to the postponement of any agreement between Mercosur and the European Union.

On substance, it is difficult to see much difference in Brazil’s negotiating position between this administration and the previous one. All the major challenges at the WTO had been launched under Cardoso and Brazil’s stand has not changed substantially. The strategy adopted, however, particularly at the WTO, has been distinct, involving the establishment of coalitions meant to transcend the specific negotiation sessions. These coalitions, in this case, were distinctly

South-South, and they were explicitly given a broader political significance, primarily by Brazil, but also by India and South Africa. The two main outcomes of this strategy, the G-20 and the India–Brazil–South Africa (IBSA) initiative, have in fact become somewhat institutionalized, the first through formal meetings, and the second through a formal declaration and a program of action.

In addition, to these broad multilateral initiatives, a number of smaller arrangements have been promoted involving Mercosur with various countries. None of these agreements involve major economies or even major economic partners of Brazil, most have not advanced beyond expression of interest and none has yet implied the liberalization of significant sectors of the Brazilian economy or access for its exporters to significant markets.

Another issue, very recent, also merits mention. On the occasion of the prolonged state visit by China's President along with a large and high-level delegation, the Brazilian government accepted China's request to be formally considered a market economy in the framework of the WTO. Given the overwhelming prominence of China as a target of dumping accusations by Brazilian companies, this is extremely significant: it means that Brazil recognizes that the price of products in China is not determined by state intervention, and thus that the dumping assessment procedure must involve very complex, time-consuming and ultimately expensive investigations in China itself. In practice, it means that anti-dumping has now become much less effective as a defensive weapon against China's cheap exports to Brazil. Given the broadly recognized challenges the latter represent for Latin American manufacturers as a group (Moreira 2004), it is no wonder that private sector organizations have complained bitterly (OESP 2005a).

Up to this point, and perhaps surprisingly, little mention has been made of Mercosur. Over the last two years and in part because of the economic crisis in Argentina, the regional agreement has been going through one of its periodic bouts of crisis and mutual criticism. In addition to a succession of "wars" between the two countries – from fridge and washing machines to shoes and salter flour – Argentina is now asking for the formalization of mechanisms meant to balance trade between the two countries and to authoritatively allocate FDI among Mercosur members. Brazilian business organizations have in

turn accused Argentina of impeding progress on a number of trade agreements. The problems are not limited to relations with Argentina, moreover: Brazil and Uruguay have been fighting bitterly for the position of director general of the WTO – which both lost, incidently – and even Paraguay has been less than helpful from a Brazilian standpoint as, for instance, its close relationship with Taiwan is developing into a significant stumbling block for any attempts at formalizing a trade agreement with Beijing (Ming 2004).

A formidable amount of writing has been produced to show how much trade has grown between the two countries, how much Mercosur has become part and parcel of the trade policies of its four members, how it is now developing into a major trading block through association agreements with basically all of Brazil's neighbours on the continent, how useful it has been as a core negotiation bloc in global multilateral fora and how different it is to the other neo-liberal models existing or being promoted in the hemisphere (Thorstensen 2002). In addition, one could also point to the manifold political ramifications of the agreement and to an expanding institutional framework that now includes a dispute resolution mechanism to which a "Mercosur Parliament" could even be added. Beyond the recent proliferation of pitched battles and tensions, however, a growing number of analysts point to the challenges confronting the regional regime (Pinheiro Guimarães 2003; Souza 2003) and even to its crisis, progressive decay and growing dysfunctionalities (Costa Vaz 2004: 248; Lambert 2004). From the standpoint of Brazil's trade policy and especially in broad economic terms, moreover, it appears that Mercosur remains utterly marginal: in 2003, after more than a decade of integration, total manufacturing trade between Brazil and its three partners, at US\$ 11.7bn, represented less than 2.5% of Brazil's GDP (WTO 2004: 3, 187, 189). Notwithstanding the continuing economic problems of its three junior partners and the tensions with Argentina, fast growing trade with China is quickly leading to the marginalization of the bloc as a trading partner for Brazil. From the standpoint of the current trade negotiation processes, finally, the cooperation with South Africa, India and especially China clearly dwarf the contribution of the Brazil's Mercosur partners. This does not necessarily mean that Mercosur's survival is at stake, but suggest that there is little economic reason for Brazil to consider it a priority.

3.2 Security: Pragmatic Assertiveness

Ever since WWII, Brazil has had a very low profile on international security issues and in fact, with a few exceptions – its formal leadership of the Inter-American expeditionary force in the Dominican Republic in 1965, in particular – it has been essentially absent from the global and even from the regional security picture. As a slightly troubled, self-centred and benign non-interventionist giant, and through a professional and effective diplomacy, it has certainly contributed to the remarkably low conflictivity of international relations in South America. There is little open debate in the political establishment about the basic tenets of the country's international security policy: pacifism, multilateralism, non-intervention, respect for sovereignty and non-proliferation have been little contested since civilian rule was re-established in the 1980s. The new government, far from challenging these principles, has in fact loudly reaffirmed them in the face of the US-pushed war on terror, of its challenges to multilateralism, of its aggressive interventionism and of its challenges to sovereignty (Almeida 2004).

While the rhetoric has been consistent and even insistent, the new government's commitment to those principles appears to be less solid or at least more complex. Brazil's policy seems in fact to have been guided much less by such abstract principles than by a very pragmatic attitude structured around, on the one hand, the consolidation of its autonomy and influence in the hemisphere and, on the other, by the Brazilian government's quest for a larger and more visible role at the global level, in part through its accession to a permanent seat on the UN Security Council.

The most visible and perhaps most surprising foreign policy initiative of the new government has been its involvement in Haiti. On the face of it, and also in the official story, Brazil is only doing there what it has done efficiently and with honour in more than twenty other countries over the last thirty years: keeping the peace and helping stabilise, following a request by the UN, a country reeling from a recent conflict, or riven by political tensions and threatened by violence (Lula da Silva 2004; Amorim 2005). As was clear from the very beginning, however, Haiti is a somewhat peculiar case. Jean-Bertrand Aristide, whose regime had admittedly little to recommend it, was

nonetheless broadly recognized as the legitimate President of his country. The circumstances under which he left his post remain muddled, but it is very clear that America's and France's pressure, and possibly their soldiers' presence and attitude, led to his leaving the Presidency and the country altogether in the midst of a civil war (ICG 2004: 11). The formalities were respected, with the Security Council adopting the required resolution authorizing the deployment of mostly French and American troops (1542), and with most UN State members recognizing the new government of Gérard Latortue. This nice international consensus, however, was strongly challenged by a number of states whose democratic credentials are, for the most part, pretty sound: CARICOM countries strongly denounced the intervention and even South Africa refrained for quite some time from recognizing the new government. While these governments have by now fallen back in the global fold, Venezuela is still holding firm, with Chavez vocally denouncing the new regime as illegitimate during the October 2004 Rio Group meeting (OESP 2004f).

The Franco-American intervention risked becoming increasingly expensive politically in the face of the forceful mobilization of Aristide's Lavallas partisans, incensed at his departure, and bolstered by the former President's rabid denunciation of the coup, from his South African exile. The search was therefore on for an international force that could maintain a degree of stability while giving a more neutral face to the foreign presence. Lula's Brazil volunteered to lead the mission and to provide the largest contingent. In a situation eerily reminiscent of the 1965 coup in the Dominican Republic, Brazilian soldiers under a multilateral flag were giving a political cover to a US initiative which even *The Economist* has called "a coup" (*The Economist* 2004). Given that context, the Brazilian mission has received a surprisingly warm welcome in the country and, in spite of the language barrier, of the delays in other countries' contribution of soldiers and money, and through the most deadly hurricane to hit the island in a century, they appear to be doing a reasonable job (ICG 2004; 2005). Much noise was admittedly generated by a critical report published by students from Harvard Law School and the Centro de Justiça Global

(HLSAHR/CJG 2005), but the latter wildly inflated expectations² simply cannot be used as a template to assess. Still, the situation remains extremely tense and confused, hundreds of people have been assassinated, and a real stabilization of the situation is clearly not in sight. For Brazil, moreover, it is somewhat of a stretch to reconcile the provision of a cover to such a blunt external intervention with a hard commitment to sovereignty and non-intervention. Most analysts have not even tried, linking instead Brazil's involvement with its campaign for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council (Sader 2004; *The Economist* 2004). And indeed, when Colin Powell visited Brazil in October 2004, he made a point of emphasizing the country's contribution of hemispheric stability, "particularly in Haiti" (OESP 2004d; 2004e).

Such a pragmatic attachment to principles also appears to dominate Brazil's commitment to multilateralism, under this government as under its predecessors. Indeed, Brazil appears to be quite selective regarding the level at which multilateralism is to be sought. Specifically, Brazilian diplomacy pursues the consolidation of multilateral institutions at the global and sub-hemispheric levels, but emphatically not hemispheric ones. The logic of such a preference is quite straightforward: for a country that globally ranks only as a middle power, global multilateralism offers the promise of great power management through balancing coalitions; in a hemisphere shared with the world's largest power, this simply is not an option as no coalition can truly hope to balance the hegemony; at the regional level, conversely, the crystallization of power relationships in multilateral institutions creates constraints that are much stronger for the large number of little players than for the dominant one. What Brazil seeks at the global level – balancing coalitions – is out of question for its competitors in South America, and what it denies the US at the hemispheric level

2 One wonders what recent multilateral peace mission, including passed ones in Haiti, could satisfy the lofty hopes of those critics: "Armed with a robust mandate, MINUSTAH has the potential to end Haiti's cycles of violence, develop fair and democratic institutions, and nurture a culture that honors and promotes human rights" (HLSAHR/CJG 2005: 48). MINUSTAH, in other words, "has the potential" to radically change centuries of political decay, authoritarianism and corruption in a matter of months...

– the institutionalization of regional dominance – it seeks in South America.

While this general “model” of selective – or tactical – multilateralism also appears to be followed in its trade policy, Brazil’s behaviour in regional security fora since Lula’s election certainly expresses it most vividly. In recent hemispheric summits on security and defence, in Mexico (2003) and Quito (2004), the US and its Canadian ally have promoted a number of propositions that sought to consolidate hemispheric security institutions (OAS/CHS 2003; 2004). The most ambitious ones regarded the reform of the Inter-American Defence Board, the formalization of continental cooperation on terrorism and the involvement of the military in the fight against organized crime. On all these counts, Brazil was one of the main voices of opposition and, given the general scepticism of most American states in the face of arrangements that would simply enshrine the massive military asymmetry that prevails in the hemisphere, all the relevant proposals were defeated. Ironically, given that the Quito meeting took place while Brazil was committing to staying one more year in Haiti, the debate was won to a large extent in the name of national sovereignty and non-intervention (OCSA 2004a; 2004b). Conversely, Brazil has been keen, at the annual reunions of the Rio Group and at the founding meeting of the South American Community of Nations, on proposals for military cooperation at the sub-hemispheric level.

The third security dimension touches again the issue of multilateralism, but it regards something that had become a kind of taboo in Brazilian foreign policy circles: non-proliferation. Ever since the Sarney government and its followers launched and then sealed the rapprochement with Argentina around the burial of their respective military nuclear programs, a turn was taken regarding proliferation that appeared to be co-substantive with democratization itself: the social consensus that had existed regarding the need for the country not to abide by such an asymmetrical regime as the NPR appeared to morph in a few years into its opposite, with non-proliferation becoming a core principle of the country’s foreign policy. While this appeared to gel under Cardoso’s international strategy of “participatory inclusion” (Vigevani/Cepaluni 2007), a number of incidents suggest that Lula himself and quite a few people around him partake of the older outlook (Goldemberg 2004).

The first incident took place during the electoral campaign, when Lula, addressing a military audience, complained that “the Non-Proliferation Treaty, signed by Brazil, only creates obligations for the weaker countries” (OESP 2002). Immediately, the possibility that a PT government would denounce the treaty were quickly dismissed as misrepresentations and support for the country’s commitment to the regime was strongly reaffirmed. Once Lula was elected, however, the theme kept popping up in declarations of his Minister of Science and Technology. Again, the implications of the latter were minimized and the general thrust of the country’s policy reaffirmed. More recently, however, a row developed between Brazil and the IAEA regarding inspections to the Resende nuclear facilities. That row was resolved to the satisfaction of the IAEA authorities, but not before doubts were raised, particularly in the US, albeit not mainly from the Bush administration, about Brazil’s commitment to the NPR (Aronson 2005; Deutch/Kanter et al. 2004: 75-78).

There are no grounds at this point to think that Brazil wants to develop nuclear weapons. This series of events, however, suggest that the government wants to assert its ability to decide for itself how it is to deal with the issue, without interference from foreign countries, intrusions from international organizations, or abstract attachment to principles. This attitude, stronger with this government although not new, expresses again a degree of pragmatism towards multilateral institutions and even a growing scepticism about those regimes that are felt to *unfairly* limit the ability of the country to pursue its own objectives and to defend its own interests. Such a stand on nuclear energy, along with those that regard intervention and multilateralism, must be understood as part of the broader, less abstractly principled outlook of this government’s foreign policy.

3.3 Political Diplomacy: Seeking Recognition and Getting it

Brazil’s foreign policy under this government, or for that matter most previous ones, cannot easily be subsumed under the defence and promotion of economic or security interests. Lots of efforts and resources have been devoted to endeavours whose concrete material and political implications are ambiguous and even sometimes contradictory. There is something else at stake that simply cannot be reduced to nar-

rowly defined interests and one must consider that power and prestige as such, independently of their potential “use”, are a central objective of that policy. In the case of the current government, the most important manifestation of these meta-endeavours is certainly Brazil’s intense and even aggressive quest for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council.

In September 2004, an article in the *Estado de São Paulo* stated bluntly that Foreign Minister Celso Amorim had convinced “Lula to make the country’s aspiration to a permanent seat in the Security Council the main objective of Brazilian diplomacy” (OESP 2004d). While the primacy of the objective might be disputed, it is impossible not to see that references to this goal are now standard in foreign policy statements and in analyses of foreign policy (Guimarães 2001; Saraiva 2005).

Yet, both Brazil’s rhetoric and its international behaviour force one to look beyond that objective and focus instead on its meaning. For what is sought in fact is a broad and belated – from Brazilian elites’ standpoint – recognition of Brazil’s importance in the world. That famous permanent seat should thus be seen essentially as a symbol of that recognition, a symbol that is now being sought with increasing energy. And indeed, Brazil’s claim to that seat has been a constant in the country’s diplomacy and a *sine qua non* in Lula’s numerous meetings with foreign leaders, from Omar Bongo to Vladimir Putin. It cannot have escaped Brazilian diplomacy, however, that in practice, a permanent seat on the Security Council, especially as part of a significantly expanded council, could make the latter even less responsive and relevant to the management of global security issues.

Along with most proponents of an expanded Council, however, Brazil and the other contenders – Germany, Japan, South Africa, India, and perhaps also Egypt or even Indonesia – argue that the heightened legitimacy of an expanded structure would ipso facto make it more effective, an argument that was also supported by an independent commission on UN reform, and by Kofi Annan himself (OESP 2004c). Given the insistence of the seat-seekers on their own individual candidacy, however, one is left with the strong impression that none of them would withdraw its claim, even if it were shown that an expanded council would be less effective. For all of them, in sum, the

whole issue appears to be primarily symbolic, with UN legitimacy and effectiveness a lesser if not a marginal preoccupation.

In the case of Brazil for instance, the claim is presented above all as a matter of realism and justice, not in terms of what Brazil's presence would concretely add. "Representation" strictly speaking, i.e. the diplomatic construction of a major international power identity appears to be the core driver of the campaign – something it arguably has been since the very beginning of that quest, shortly after WWII.

The process through which Brazil promotes its candidacy, however, is possibly as revealing of the logic and ultimate motives as its quest for a permanent seat. It shows how much Brazil has now outgrown the Americas, how effective it is at alliance- and coalition-building, how pragmatic it is in its choice of partners and institutional basis, and finally how ready it is to pay a price for reaching for what are not by any means material or security gains.

Brazil has explicitly and systematically sought support for its claim through bilateral contacts and visits, particularly with current permanent members. It has in fact received such support, more or less explicitly from, among others, Russia, France, the US, and China. It has also joined a formal coalition of potential joiners, the G-4, along with Germany, Japan, and India (OESP 2004b). In parallel, it has also formed, with India and South Africa, a multi-faceted quasi-alliance, now dubbed IBSA (Taylor 2004), whose members also present themselves as natural candidates to the Council. Brazil, finally, has also tried to enlist the support of Latin American state groupings, particularly the Rio Group and now the South American Community of Nations, albeit without convincing them of its exclusive claim to represent them at the Council (LAWR 2004).

Aside from diplomatic pressure and work with self-interested groupings – the G-4 and IBSA – Brazil's campaign has also implied costs and concrete commitments. Sometimes, as in the case of Gabon, it simply involved forgiving a debt of \$30 million that would never have been paid. With the countries that count, however, i.e. primarily the Council's permanent members (P-5), more apparently needed to be offered, and more was. Here, the question of Haiti for the US and France has to have played a role, and Colin Powell suggested as much when, visiting Brasília, he mentioned together Brazil's possible membership in the Council and its significant contribution to the stability

of the region, particularly in Haiti. With China and Russia, commercial concessions – China’s “market economy” status – and strategic collaboration, for instance around space initiatives, certainly have helped generate openness.

That being said, it would probably be a mistake to make a narrow reading of these agreements between Brazil and current permanent members of the Council. Clearly, the latter are open to Brazil’s growing involvement in the world or at least they see it as something normal. The Club, in other words, appears to be interested and the recent intensification of collaboration must probably be seen less as instances of short term bargaining than as points in a much broader pattern of collaboration.

Brazil in sum, appears to be increasingly successful in its claim to “big powerdom”. In political diplomacy, as in trade and security, Brazil’s commitment to current multilateral arrangements, in this case the UN system, goes hand in hand with a challenge to their legitimacy and effective diplomacy and coalition-building geared at challenging their existing make-up.

4. Success? The Prize and its Price

In general terms, there is little doubt that Lula’s foreign policy has been a success: the visibility, prestige and influence of Brazil in the world have never been greater. Not only has Lula’s hyper-active diplomacy taken him all over the planet, but conversely, at this point in time, Brazil appears to be the most popular partner or the preferred guest in the whole world: at the G-3, G-4, G-7, G-8, G-20, G-22 and L-20; in New York, Davos, Libreville, Luanda or Delhi; or of Bush, Chirac or Putin. Brazil, its President, its foreign minister and its diplomats are becoming “normal” and a *sought after* presence in fora where significant trade, political and even security issues are discussed. To the extent that such a recognition of Brazil’s influence and prestige is a fundamental goal of the country’s diplomacy and a keen desire of its elites since at least the beginning of the century, the foreign policy of this government is a resounding success.

Moreover, and although it is much more difficult to assess, the progress made looks unlikely to be undone, for two main reasons. The first is Brazil’s sheer demographic and economic weight in the world.

As much of the Western world – except the US – is shrinking demographically, as prospects for rapid growth in fast-greying Europe and Japan appear to be disappearing for good, as Russia's institutional weaknesses look increasingly intractable, and as Africa looks set for many more decades of misery, a stable and liberal Brazil looks convincingly, after China and India, like one of the few significant major players in the new century's global game (NIC 2004; Boyer/Truman 2005: 147-148³). Brazil's massive and unchallengeable prominence in South America is the second basis of its definitive claim to global relevance. The economic and political consolidation that followed Lula's election crystallizes that prominence in a region blighted by seemingly intractable problems. While Brazil's explicit claim to regional prominence remains contentious politically, contenders such as Argentina and Venezuela, however noisy, will simply never be able to challenge it.

For both these reasons, what happens at the Security Council is, symbolism aside, irrelevant: Brazil has joined the Club and, as Germany, Japan and now India have shown over the years, a permanent seat at the Council is not a requisite for membership. The foregoing analysis suggests in fact that Brazil's global gains derive more from the changes that took place domestically than from the hectic activism that has characterized its foreign policy in recent years.

Now, if Brazil's diplomatic activism is not the fount of the country's newly minted global prestige, what has it produced exactly? Well, the least one can say is that concrete results, while far from negligible, are not bountiful.

Some political gains certainly have been made, especially in trade fora, as Brazil has established itself as a major power broker, contributing mightily to a redefinition of the politics of global trade policy, notably at the WTO, but also in the FTAA process. The extent to which this implies a democratization of the process is less clear. Brazil, like every country involved, seeks less a change *of* the system than a change *in* the system, whereby its own ability to influence outcomes is maximized. The tensions with some African countries around agri-

3 This is especially true from the US' standpoint: in 2002, Brazil, with \$91.8bn worth of US investment, was second only to Mexico (at \$137.3), and significantly more important than Korea (\$75.4) and China (\$28.0). Cf. Boyer/ Truman (2005, Table 5.1 and 5.2, respectively p. 148 and 150).

cultural subsidies and tariffs, which Brazil seeks, but about which former European colonies and net food importers are more ambiguous, is a case in point (Panagariya 2004).⁴

This particular problem points to the limits of the South-South agenda to which the government has committed itself and devoted so much jet fuel and rhetoric: beyond generalities about under-development and “periphery”, the “South” simply does not define a general community of interest, a shared identity or a common outlook. As Brazil finds out on a daily basis, the closer the neighbours, the lesser the support for its global endeavours: Leaving aside the bitter fight that opposed Brazil and Uruguay about the position of secretary-general of the WTO – which both countries ended up losing – no significant Latin American country supports Brazil’s claim to a permanent seat at the UN security council. Further abroad, one cannot but be sceptical of the long-term potential of IBSA, given India’s rigid stance on so central an issue as agricultural liberalization. South Africa’s very “independent” views on Haiti – whose exiled President has taken up residence in Nelson Mandela’s quarters – also promise less than automatic blessing for Brazil’s global endeavours. As to China, there is no indication that its policy will be any less cold-blooded towards Brazil than it is towards everybody else.

The launch of the South American Community of Nations in Cuzco (December 2004) proved to be an anti-climax: only five Presidents showed up, none from Brazil’s Mercosur partner countries; of those five, only three signed on a founding Protocol (Brazil, Chile, and Peru) that includes no specific target beyond an abstract commitment to total integration in 15 years. The first South American and Arab Countries Summit, in Brasília (May 10-11, 2005), proved to be similarly disappointing: beyond the announcement of a still-to-be-signed free-trade framework agreement between the Gulf Cooperation

4 These tensions came to the fore during the campaign for the general secretariat of the WTO, in which the candidate from Mauritius was seen as a threat for Brazil: “No ponto de vista do governo brasileiro, sob a condução do chanceler das Ilhas Maurício [Jaya Krishna Cuttaree], a OMC tenderia a concluir a Rodada Roha sem os avanços pretendidos na eliminação de subsídios e outros esquemas tortuosos do comércio agrícola que, supostamente, favorecem os países africanos.” O Estado de São Paulo, April 19, 2005, “Brasil pode apoiar Lamy à OMC”.

Council and Mercosur – which barely trade at all at this point –⁵ not only were the Presidents of Egypt and Saudi Arabia, among others, absent, but the biggest event of the meeting was the very public snub of Nestor Kirchner, who left the event after one day, even though Argentina’s requested statement on the Malvinas had been included in the final declaration (OESP 2005b).⁶

It appears in fact that relations with the North hold much more promise and are likely to be much easier to manage than with a fractured, poor and unstable South. Security Council reform is a case in point as support for Brazil is much stronger among Northern powers than almost anywhere else in the world. The paradox is momentous but inescapable: it is only in the North that Brazil finds support for its claim to be a voice of the South... Which says a lot about the “success” of the government’s South-South campaign.

From a narrow economic standpoint the results are also extremely thin. At a time where constraining fiscal and monetary policy make its economy’s health more dependent than ever on exports, Brazil secured significant market access ... nowhere. Its diplomats were able to lead, organize or single-handedly man blocking coalitions in all the trade fora where concessions were asked, but little was offered: Doha, the FTAA, the EU-Mercosur negotiations. They were able to launch a plethora of smaller trade initiatives and to sign a variety of agreements with a multitude of partners: India and South Africa, the South-American Community, Bolivia, the Andean Community, the South African Community Union (SACU), the Gulf Cooperation Council, and so on, but none of those agreements really has sizeable implications for the tenth biggest economy in the world. Admittedly, not much was on offer, but the results remain disappointing.

On security issues, finally, the continuing inability of the US to consolidate a hemispheric regime that would reflect its priorities – terrorism and organized crime for now – is consistent with long-held and unchanged Brazilian priorities. However, Brazil’s foray in Haiti,

5 According to Brazil’s Minister of Development, Industry and Commerce, Luiz Fernando Furlan, South America’s exports represent only 1% of Arab countries’ total imports.

6 See Cervo (2005) for a wildly favourable reading of the Brasília Summit, which the author compares, albeit with some reserves, to the Bandung conference in 1956.

which gained its government much credit from Western powers, looks increasingly like a political swamp from which the country will soon want to extricate itself, leaving not much in its wake except resentment among CARICOM countries and diffidence from every other small state in the Americas.

This experience, however, in all its ambiguities, could well be the precursor of many more, especially if Brazil wants to keep its credit among big powers, particularly the US: as trouble expands among its neighbours, calls from Washington for Brazil to assume “its responsibilities” will no doubt become more strident. Already, Condoleezza Rice has pointed to Brazil’s crucial role in containing Venezuela’s ambitions. Moreover, as the Andes sink ever deeper into crisis and instability, Brazil’s own interests are converging with those of the US: can Brasília really afford chaos and failed states in its immediate neighbourhood any more than Washington can thousands of kilometres from its Southern border? Regional security is indeed developing into the area where Brazil’s claim to a global status will be tested the most acutely. It is also an area where the country’s options are quickly disappearing: regional “leadership”, however contested, is simply the only choice Brazil has, something that Lula, at least, seems ready to accept. Such a move has profound implications, in terms of diplomatic and military capabilities, but also, and perhaps more fundamentally, in symbolic terms. As China and India have discovered, after Russia, Japan and especially the US, membership to the Club comes with a price: hegemonies, global or regional, are not liked; they are at best tolerated, at worse deeply hated. As Brazil consolidates its position in South America, it will need to shed its self-image of a benign giant and see itself through others’ eyes: a self-interested power seeker, a member of the Club, resented and feared by outsiders, accepted and relied upon by its members.

5. Conclusion

Lula’s election, precisely because it led neither to significant policy changes nor to political instability, represents a major breakthrough for Brazilian foreign policy. It created the conditions for Brazil’s successfully claiming of a place, for the first time, among the few dominant global powers.

Beyond the specifics of an hyperactive foreign policy, one can detect in Brazilian foreign policy patterns that are consistent with the behaviour of such powers. The most striking one is the opportunistic resort to international rules and regimes: when existing arrangements suit one, they are fully used; when they don't, their rules and principles are strongly contested and if necessary, violated. International norms and regimes now appear purely as instruments to be used or ditched as befit circumstances. Long – apparently? – a principled regionalist, multi-lateralist and non-interventionist, Brazil has now become a tactical one. Mercosur is the right lever in some negotiations, the G-20 or IBSA in others, and the G-5 (with other Security Council hopefuls) in still others. China is the right ally on some issues, South Africa, Venezuela or Chile on others, and the United States, France and Russia on still others. Non-intervention is a fundamental principle one day at one place, a relative one the week after or somewhere else.

Such calculating behaviour is not, as such, bad or good. It is the mark of those who can adopt it, and get away with it. It is the mark of a global power. Brazil's full membership in the club might not yet be perfectly clear, especially to Brazil's own political and diplomatic elites. This is why so much of its foreign policy remains wrapped in a South-centred, dependency-laced rhetoric. Soon enough, however, prodded in no small measure by denunciations from its closest neighbours, Brazil's foreign policy will discover that its fate lies not in "leading" the periphery but, in more than one way, in leaving it.

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