

The missing link: defense cooperation in Brazilian-African relations (2003-2013)

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Abstract

Brazil's refocus on Africa throughout the last decade has attracted considerable attention, albeit if primarily focused on traditional vectors of engagement, such as high-level political dialogue, exponential economic and trade interactions, and disbursement of development aid assistance. However, this paper argues that important niches in Southern transatlantic relations are missing in such a debate, namely defense cooperation endeavors, which were also met with considerable growth of their own during the same period. As such, while framed by the country's strategic priorities and defense concerns, this paper covers the main instruments used in the pursuit of those same ends and assess its current level of execution, with the ultimate purpose of complementing the customary explanations for Brazil's rapprochement with Africa in the last decade.

Keywords: Brazil, Africa, defense cooperation

Introduction

In the last decade, Brazil's foreign policy strategy in the world at large has been observed with rather curious lens. Indeed, its rise in the internationally established framework has won considerable interest for the overall model followed towards achieving such a goal. Among many constituting vectors, it is possible to single out the important role of the evolving South-South relations, which implied the development of significant business and trade ties with African countries while dully accompanied by the political backing of both former-President Lula da Silva's government and President Dilma Rousseff. Brazil's refocus on Africa has thus come to attract considerable attention, while primarily focused on traditional vectors of engagement, such as high-level political dialogue, exponential economic and trade interactions, and disbursement of development aid assistance.

This paper, however, argues that important niches in Southern transatlantic relations are missing in such a debate, namely defense cooperation endeavors, which were also met with considerable growth of during the same period. With that goal in mind, the paper draws extensively from fieldwork conducted in April-June 2013 in Brazil, with the purpose of providing a complete depiction of the discrete but increasing Brazilian interest for such specific cooperative ties between the two sides of the Atlantic, amidst a renewed interest on Africa.

It thus starts by highlighting the foundations that have sustained Brazil's renewed focus on Africa, with a focus on the three major arguments traditionally brought forward. Afterwards, the strategic rationale for Brazilian engagement with African countries in the defense domain is presented by means of Brazil's official guidelines and regional multilateral involvement. The third section then provides an accurate and updated depiction of the state of defense cooperation relations between Brazil and African countries from 2003 to 2013, with a specific focus on defense cooperation agreements, military training, equipment sale, joint exercises and defense industry interest in Africa. Finally, the main obstacles that impeded and still impede further developments in this area are also addressed, followed by some concluding remarks highlighting the need to complement customary explanations for Brazil's rapprochement with Africa with the existence of concurrently security and strategic concerns.

Brazil and Africa: the standard arguments

Behind Brazil's push for closer relations with African countries, it is usually possible to find a customary emphasis on a number of driving reasons or goals, which have end up leading, one way or the other, the two sides of the Atlantic towards each other in the past few years. Although with varying degrees of applicability, they can be traditionally summed up into three sets of explanatory arguments.

Right from the start, current Brazilian-African relations have been traditionally framed within the wider political significance of South-South relations *per se*. Considered an instrumental component of Brazilian foreign policy agenda in the Lula years, this particular approach was essentially perceived as a means to an end, in this case, the fulfillment of a larger international insertion agenda that sought to see Brazil take its place among the world's elite as a consensually-recognized rising power. However, such strategy did not exactly comprise a novelty in itself as previous Brazilian leaderships had already gone down that road before, especially when it came to increased contacts with African countries.¹ In that sense, it would be more accurate to speak of a revival of past traditions – some would opt to call it instead a “rebirth” of sorts (Saraiva 2010, 174) – than really a brand new foreign policy orientation. In either case, the Presidency of Lula da Silva sought to bring it to the forefront of priorities and that alone, represented a stark contrast with previous administrations (Vigevani and Cepaluni 2009).

Lula's revamped foreign policy thus involved brokering a number of alliances where African votes were fundamental for Brazil's external goals – like in the trade negotiations of 2003 in Cancun, Mexico that gave birth to the original G-20 or even in the wider campaign for a Brazilian seat in the UN Security Council – but also in promoting new multilateral forums that supposedly accommodated new shifting patterns of power in the evolving international order, like the institutionalization of IBSA (India, Brazil and South Africa) or the South American-African Heads of State and Government Summits. In that sense, recognition of “southern heterogeneity” (Lima and Hirst 2006, 36) clearly became pivotal for Brazilian policymakers.

¹ For an account of Brazil's previous efforts in this regard see, for example, Saraiva (1996), Pimentel (2000) and Ribeiro (2008), (2009).

Likewise, the adding of 19 new embassies in Africa between 2003 and 2013,² as well as President Lula's 28 visits to 23 African countries, former-Foreign Minister Celso Amorim 67 visits to 31 countries, Dilma Rousseff's 3 visits to 7 countries, and former-Foreign Minister Antonio Patriota 20 visits to 13 countries provided the required finishing touches to such engagement. On the other hand, the opening of 17 new African diplomatic representations in Brasília also added further substance to these ties.

A second possible rationalization of Brazil's motives, which escapes the strictly political parameters, lies with acknowledging the trade and economic opportunities that have emerged since Brazil started 'reconnecting' with Africa. A 417% and 433% increase in Brazilian exports and Brazilian imports to and from Africa, respectively, from 2002 to 2012, undoubtedly accounts for evidence of a rising trade pattern. But this trend is even better expressed by values of their common trade balance: during the same period of analysis, it witnessed an overall 426% increase, from US\$ 5 billion to US\$ 26.5 billion – including an all-time record of US\$ 27.7 billion in 2011 alone (Brasil, Ministério das Relações Exteriores 2013).

Moreover, Brazil also saw in Africa tremendous potential for the expansion of its own companies' reach. In that sense, Brazilian conglomerates such as Vale, Petrobras, Odebrecht, Andrade Gutierrez, Queiroz Galvão, OAS or Camargo Corrêa made their way into the continent or reaffirmed their position in some African countries where they were already present, with significant investments on local mining, oil exploration, civil construction and agriculture projects. These entry points were also facilitated by the combined effect of the different stimuli and support provided by both the *Banco Nacional de Desenvolvimento Económico e Social* (BNDES – Brazilian Development Bank), and the *Agência Brasileira de Promoção de Exportações e Investimentos* (APEX-Brasil – Brazilian Trade and Investment Promotion Agency). During Rousseff's tenure, US\$ 870 million in overdue debts were also pardoned to 12 African countries thus paving the way for even further BNDES loans to support greater economic transactions between all parts, while an

² By 2011, the total of embassies on the ground amounted to 37, which provided Brazil with the 5th largest diplomatic network in Africa, only behind such countries as the US (49), China (48), France (46) and Russia (38).

inter-ministerial group, the GTEX-Africa, was formed with the purpose of facilitating those same relations.

However, despite the continuing validity and recurring use of the aforementioned arguments, Brazilian authorities have, in recent years, particularly favored a third and different official explanation for the intensification of ties with the African continent. Indeed, the use of a political discourse highlighting the common historical-cultural links that connects the Brazilian society to populations in Africa assumed a central role in the government's discourse, when addressing these specific relations. Now-Defense Minister Celso Amorim unequivocally corroborated such a view when stating, "Beyond incidental political and economic gains, the search for closer relations with Africa [has been] guided by historic, demographic and cultural bonds" (Amorim 2010, 233). Among such "historic, demographic and cultural bonds", special emphasis was then given to the notion of indebtedness between Brazil and Africa, in a departing from past "culturalist" interpretations of Brazil's African roots and its own views as a racial democracy role model for Africa.³

The subscription of this thematic then led to "the replacement of a silent period in [Brazil's] relationship with Africa for a cycle of cooperation and common altruistic projects for the other side of the South Atlantic" (Saraiva 2010, 174). That, in turn, reflected itself in the amount of aid and cooperation projects developed throughout the last few years. In 2010 alone, the *Agência Brasileira de Cooperação* (ABC – Brazilian Cooperation Agency) was in charge of managing nearly 300 different cooperation projects in 37 African countries with varying degrees of execution, all the while Africa accounted for 57% of all Brazilian technical cooperation disbursed in that same year (Brasil, ABC 2010) (Cabral 2011, 21). Agriculture and especially food safety assumed a key role in this kind of endeavors. Likewise, the potential around a possible generalized adoption of biofuels use was also repeatedly conveyed (Barbosa, Narciso and Biancalana 2009, 73).

It can be thus claimed that the issue of a Brazilian "Africanity" of sorts, as Saraiva puts it (2010, 179), was developed at the same time as the country sought out a more assertive foreign policy towards Africa that could seemingly conciliate different strategic vectors, whether more political or more economic oriented, but

³ For an account of how the "culturalist" discourse influenced Brazilian foreign policy towards Africa until the early nineties, see Saraiva (1993).

always tied to such kind of a discourse. Following this same line of thought, White proposes a working structure around the three main features of “political diplomacy, neo-mercantilism and development cooperation” (2010, 228). Similarly, Vizentini sees Brazil’s initiatives as falling within the categories of “political discourse/prestige diplomacy” and “economic interest/soft imperialism”, or a combination of both, aiming for “socio-economic development/southern solidarity” (2010, 80).

Be as it may, despite its methodological usefulness, such tripartite views of Brazil’s overall strategy hinder the analysis of other seemingly interesting venues of cooperation that may have also been met with significant increase. Initiatives in the defense domain clearly fall in this category.

The prioritization of Africa as a Brazilian strategic concern

Brazil’s enshrinement of Africa amidst its defense and strategic priorities is inevitably framed by the South Atlantic in-between. Indeed, a swift analysis of Brazil’s strategic guidelines in recent years allows to pinpoint the level of priority given to such area. The 2008 National Defense Strategy, for example, goes as far as to state that the most acute defense concerns for Brazil reside not only in the North and West regions but also in the South Atlantic, all the while considering a possible “threat of an armed conflict in the South Atlantic region” as a factor to take into consideration when developing the conditions for the future deployment of Brazilian Armed Forces and urging the increase of Brazil’s military presence in that same area (Brasil, Ministério da Defesa 2008, 13, 48, 49).

On the other hand, the National Defense Policy in its revised edition of 2012, states that while “seeking to deepen its ties of cooperation, [Brazil] envisions a strategic environment that exceeds the mass of the subcontinent and includes the projection along the limits of the South Atlantic and bordering countries in Africa.” Moreover, “Brazil attaches priority to the countries of South America and Africa, especially the ones in West Africa and of Portuguese language” (Brasil, Ministério da Defesa, 2012b, 4.1, 5.9). Following that same line of thought, the most recent version of Brazil’s Defense White Book indicates that, “the protection of lines of communication and trade routes with Africa has strategic significance for the country” (Brasil, Ministério da Defesa, 2012a, 51).

The expression of such clear formalization of Brazil's interest in the stability and security of this area can also be found amidst the strong investment in several regional organizations and forums that provide an additional multilateral coverage. At the top of the list stands the *Zona de Paz e Cooperação do Atlântico Sul* (ZOPACAS – South Atlantic Peace and Cooperation Zone), brought back from institutional hibernation in 2007, during the Ministerial Meeting of Luanda, Angola, and which has since then picked up the rhythm of activities. The latest meeting in Montevideo, Uruguay, on early 2013, for example, could not stress enough the “need to continue to preserve the South Atlantic region free from the scourge of war, the instability of conflict, drug trafficking, piracy”, while emphasizing common mechanisms of cooperation (ZOPACAS 2013, 11). The same logic applies to IBSA trilateral defense cooperation.

The *Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa* (CPLP – Community of Portuguese Language Countries), on the other hand, has also begun to increase its stake in defense matters, including the formulation of a common ocean strategy and the deepening of consultations on a ministerial level over defense and sea matters. During the last gathering of this sort, Amorim himself, admitted, “since I assumed Brazil's Defense Ministry, I have made clear the priority I attach to cooperation with Africa and, in particular, with our Portuguese-speaking partners, in order to increment naval, land and air defense capabilities. The potential of cooperation extends from the lessons learned with joint exercises between our forces, to the formation, in practice and without artificiality, of a CPLP security and defense identity” (Amorim 2013, 5).

Whether through its strategic guidelines or by means of multilateral instruments with a vested interest in this area, it thus becomes clear how Brazil prioritizes these issues. The main political goal is one and the same: Brazil “should build with these regions [South America, South Atlantic and West Africa] a true ‘good-will belt’ that ensures our safety and allows us to proceed, without hitches, in the path of development” (Amorim 2012, 10). But despite the clear South Atlantic incline of Brazil's formal priorities, it is evident that the remaining African continent is not totally unconsidered in this regard, as interactions with wider regional organizations indicate. The following section therefore seeks to demonstrate how that is achieved in practice.

Brazilian defense cooperation with Africa

Defense cooperation ties have a tendency to originate on one's country's military powers capabilities. Hence, it can take up multiple sub-forms, including the training of foreign militaries apparatus, international military education programs, regular joint exercises, or even humanitarian assistance and relief to disaster-stricken countries (Nye 2011, 47). The overall purpose is to foment mutual trust between the intervening parts, all the while using the technical and logistical means that come with the possession and potential projection of military force.

In the case of Brazil and Africa, previous attempts to cover this issue have either turned out solely focused on South Atlantic dynamics (Abdenur and Neto 2014) or simply incomplete (Aguilar 2013). Bearing in mind the central purpose of the paper, this section opts to cover Brazilian efforts while regarding Africa as a whole so as to encompass the full spectrum of initiatives carried out during the period of analysis. It therefore concentrates on a number of sub-areas, representative of the underlying intensity of overall cooperation in this domain, with a specific focus on defense cooperation agreements, training of military personnel, sale or donation of military equipment, joint exercises and good-will visits, and the interest of Brazil's defense industry sector in Africa.

Defense cooperation agreements

In terms of Brazil and Africa relations in defense cooperation, a considerable increase of formal instruments between Brazil and countries in the region was witnessed during the period in question. Between 2003 and 2013, a total of nine general defense cooperation agreements were signed with such partners as Angola (2010), Equatorial Guinea (2010), Guinea-Bissau (2006), Mozambique (2009), Namibia (2009), Nigeria (2010), São Tomé and Príncipe (2010), Senegal (2010) and South Africa (2003).

The expressed rationale hardly ever differed for the main dispositions were also, often enough, virtually identical. High-level visits by the respective country's civil and military leaderships, contacts between military learning institutions, implementation and development of joint programs in defense technology and,

specially, exchange of personnel for training purposes, topped such agreements, as exhibited by Table 1.

Table 1 - Defense agreements between Brazil and African countries (2003-2013)

Countries Measures	ANG	EQ GUI	GUI-B *	MOZ	NAM	NIG	STP	SEN	SA
High-level visits by civil and military leaderships	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Meetings between defense institutions and respective staff	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Exchange of students and instructors	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Participation in courses, seminars, internships, etc.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Reciprocal visits by each country's Armed Forces, warships and aircrafts	X	X	X		X	X		X	X
Cultural and sport events	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Implementation and development of defense technology programs	X	X	X		X	X		X	
Promotion of trade initiatives in the defense area	X		X		X	X			
Cooperation/consultation in defense materials and services	X	X	X				X	X	
Military legislation							X		
Humanitarian, health-medical and search and rescue (S&R) assistance							X		
Joint exercises and instruction	X						X		X
Joint research in military production	X								**

Presence of observers in national exercises	X								
Supply, maintenance and repair of military equipment	X								

Data collected and systematized by the author

* Also established the Brazilian Mission for Technical-Military Cooperation in Guinea-Bissau.

** The development of Brazil and South Africa's prime defense industrial endeavor, the A-Darter air-to-air missile, falls outside of this agreement.

Three exceptional cases concerning these formal bonds are worthy of greater mention. The first resides with Namibia, with whom Brazil has worked extensively on such matters since 1994, including through the establishment of a Naval Mission in Walvis Bay, thus effectively helping to build Namibia's Navy from scratch. Guinea-Bissau, on the other hand, received considerable Brazilian efforts towards the stabilization of its notorious unlawful security sector, with its height consisting of the *Missão Brasileira de Cooperação Técnico-Militar* (MBCTM – Brazilian Mission for Technical-Military Cooperation). However, disruption of internal order due to, yet again, another coup, brought such projects to a halt and the current suspension of its envisioned activities. Finally, the establishment of the core of a future Brazilian Naval Mission in Cape Verde, as formalized on August 2013, and in charge of assessing the conditions and needs of the country for the design and implementation of a full-fledged mission in a near future, heralds a new phase of engagement with this country.

Military training

Training opportunities for foreign military has consistently played a part in Brazil's outreach to neighbors and partners, and Africa has been no exception. As seen in Table 2, Brazilian Air Force institutions, such as *Escola de Comando e Estado Maior da Aeronáutica* (ECEMAR), *Academia da Força Aérea* (AFA) or *Centro de Instrução Especializada da Aeronáutica* (CIEAR) trained a total of 65 African officials during the 2003-2013 timeframe. Comparisons with previous years are interesting to make, as the opportunities available were then overall negligible. Hence, only after 2003, did such process gained any traction, albeit if with constantly modest numbers.

Table 2 - Military training of African officials in Brazilian Air Force institutions (2001-2013)

Countries Years	Angola	Cape Verde	Guinea Bissau	Mozambique	Namibia	Nigeria	South Africa
2001	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
2002	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2003	-	-	-	3	-	-	-
2004	5	2	-	3	-	-	-
2005	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
2006	4	2	-	-	1	-	1
2007	5	-	5	-	-	-	-
2008	-	1	2	-	-	-	-
2009	3	-	-	4	-	-	-
2010	1	-	2	4	-	-	-
2011	-	-	-	6	-	-	-
2012	-	-	-	2	-	1	-
2013	4	-	-	2	-	-	-
Total	23	5	9	24	1	1	3

Data gathered and systematized by the author under the Law for Information Access, n. 12527, 18/10/2011

Data from Brazilian Army institutions, on the other hand, is far scarcer, as numbers from 2008 onwards are considered confidential and therefore, have not been made yet available. Still, between 2005 and 2007, a total of 29 African officials were trained in such kind of specialized institutions, like the *Academia Militar das Agulhas Negras* (AMAN), *Escola de Comando e Estado-Maior do Exército* (ECEME), *Escola*

de *Aperfeiçoamento de Oficiais* (EsAO) or *Escola de Instrução Especializada* (EsIE), as shown in the following Table 3.

Table 3 - Military training of African officials in Brazilian Army institutions (2005-2007)

Countries Years	Angola	Cape Verde	Namibia	Nigeria	São Tomé and Príncipe
2005	6	2	-	1	2
2006	8	-	3	-	-
2007	6	-	-	1	-
Total	20	2	3	2	2

Data gathered and systematized by the author under the Law for Information Access, n. 12527, 18/10/2011

However, amongst the Armed Forces branches, the Brazilian Navy is unbeatable in this regard, as a total of 1933 African officials received specialized training in institutions like *Escola Naval* (EN), *Escola de Guerra Naval* (EGN) or *Centro de Instrução Almirante Alexandrino* in the last decade. The weight of Namibia in these numbers is undeniable, as evidenced by Table 4. Between 2003 and 2013, over 1897 Namibian Navy personnel benefited from these kinds of programs.

Table 4 - Military training of African officials in Brazilian Navy institutions (2002-2013)

Countries Years	Angola	Namibia	Nigeria	Mozambique	São Tomé and Príncipe	Senegal
2002	-	118	-	-	-	-
2003	-	57	-	4	-	-
2004	-	112	-	2	-	-
2005	-	49	-	-	-	-

2006	-	112	-	6	-	-
2007	-	80	-	-	-	-
2008	5	117	-	-	-	-
2009	-	315	-	-	-	-
2010	-	383	-	-	-	-
2011	-	221	-	-	-	-
2012	-	238	-	-	-	-
2013	13	213	1	6	2	2
Total	13	2015	1	18	2	2

Data gathered and systematized by the author under the Law for Information Access, n. 12527, 18/10/2011

The abovementioned numbers, however, do not account for Brazilian instructors that provided or are currently providing training in Africa. In this case, Namibia comprises, yet again, another good example, as Brazil's *Grupo de Apoio Técnico de Fuzileiros Navais* (GAT-FN –Technical Support Group for Naval Marines) proved instrumental in the creation of Namibia's Marine Corp first battalions. Meanwhile, in Benin, during the 2008-2012 period, the *Centre de Perfectionnement aux Actions Post Conflictuelles de Déminage et de Dépollution* (CPADD – West African Training Center for Humanitarian Mine Action) in Uidá, received four missions by 7 Brazilian experts, in charge of providing specialized training to local personnel.

On the other hand, in light of growing African demand for such opportunities, since 2009, the Defense Ministry and the ABC have collaborated in a new oversight of foreign military training programs, eventually formalized in 2010 between the latter and the Defense Ministry's Department of Internal Administration. Over US\$ 1.5 million was thus spent in the last five years, as evidenced below, with Mozambique comprising the greatest recipient of these programs, followed by Angola.

Table 2 - Amounts budgeted and spent by ABC in military training programs with African countries (2009-2013)

Years		2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total by country
Countries	US\$						
Angola	Budgeted	-	181.200,00	434.400,00	150.000,00	30.000,00	795.600,00
	Spent	-	54.419,68	167.634,90	83.658,54	8.485,36	314.198,48
Cape Verde	Budgeted	-	242.000,00	55.600,00	25.800,00	9.000,00	332.400,00
	Spent	-	42.198,38	24.006,22	21.868,38	4.229,69	92.302,67
Guinea-Bissau	Budgeted	-	81.000,00	15.300,00	-	-	96.300,00
	Spent	-	32.169,26	10.157,85	-	-	42.327,11
Mozambique	Budgeted	48.166,65	371.264,00	347.500,00	410.897,20	168.950,00	1.346.777,85
	Spent	17.310,28	101.698,40	272.469,64	336.272,20	75.260,13	803.010,65
Nigeria	Budgeted	-	-	22.000,00	19.500,00	12.800,00	54.300,00
	Spent	-	-	-	5.658,28	6.122,96	11.781,24
São Tomé and Príncipe	Budgeted	-	70.800,00	55.600,00	51.600,00	260.280,00	438.280,00
	Spent	-	56.708,48	46.403,95	47.101,19	44.919,22	195.132,84
Senegal	Budgeted	-	-	66.000,00	19.500,00	57.680,00	143.180,00
	Spent	-	-	-	16.812,52	35.723,26	52.535,78
Total per year	Budgeted	48.166,65	946.264,00	996.400,00	677.297,20	538.710,00	3.206.837,85
	Spent	17.310,28	287.194,20	520.672,56	511.371,11	174.740,62	1.511.288,77

Data provided by ABC and systematized by the author

Even though the focus originally resided in African Lusophone countries, it is possible to observe that new partners, like Nigeria and Senegal, also became recipients of these opportunities in recent years.

Equipment sales and donations

Regarding the sale of Brazilian defense equipment, Embraer's flagship product, the A-29 Super Tucano aircraft comprises the number one item garnering the bulk of interest amongst African countries, as evidenced by the multiple deals in recent years: in 2011 Angola acquired six units, worth US\$91 million, while Mauritania and Burkina Faso also bought three each. The latest purchase occurred on May 2013, during the Latin America Aero & Defense (LAAD) exhibition in Rio de Janeiro, where Senegal formalized its own acquisition of three A-29 Super Tucano aircraft for US\$ 67 million, together with a program for local training of pilots and equipment maintenance. On the other hand, the donation of up to two Embraer EMB 110 Bandeirante patrol aircrafts and three Embraer Tucano-T27 training aircraft to Cape Verde and Mozambique, respectively, is currently awaiting the requiring legislative authorizations.

But local maritime industry has also seen its fair share of work due to African markets alone. In 2004, Brazil donated to Namibian authorities the former Brazilian corvette *Purus*, later renamed NS *Lt. General Dimo Hamaambo*. Afterwards, Brazil built the 200-ton Naval Patrol ship, NS *Brendan Simbwaye* and two smaller patrol boats, the LP *Terrace Bay* and the LP *Möwe Bay*, both delivered to Namibia in 2009 and 2011, respectively.

A class-*Barroso* corvette as well as a Professional Qualification Program for Navy Personnel was agreed upon in 2010 with Guinea-Equatorial's authorities and a similar deal was signed with Senegalese authorities in 2013 with a declaration of intent foreseeing the future acquisition of two patrol vessels (one of 500t and the other of 200t), together with a Professional Qualification Program for Navy Personnel, at the cost of US\$ 53 million.

Finally, donations of Brazilian hardware and equipment to smaller African countries have also been recurrent, with a special focus on Lusophone partners. São Tomé and Príncipe's Coast Guard, for example, received four small boats and a shipment of 200 uniforms while Guinea-Bissau received another 300 uniforms for its Armed Forces. Likewise, on March 2012, a Brazilian supply of uniforms worth US\$169.000 was provided to Cape Verdean Coastal Guard forces.

Exercises, observers and good-will visits

An alternative method of engagement with Africa in the defense domain, resided in good-will tours carried out by Brazilian Navy vessels in African shores, which have equally increased in the last decade. For instances, in the summer of 2010, the corvette *Barroso* visited Angola, Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, Namibia, Nigeria and São Tomé and Príncipe. Afterwards, the newly constructed *Navio Patrulha Oceânico* (NPaOc – Ocean Patrol Vessel) *Amazonas* spent August 2012 sailing between Benin, Cape Verde, Nigeria and São Tomé and Príncipe. The following NPaOc, *Apa*, undertook a similar track by visiting Mauritania, Senegal, Ghana, Angola and Namibia, during its maiden trip on March-April 2013, while the *Araguari* visited Cape Verde, Liberia, Nigeria, São Tomé and Príncipe, Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea on August-September of the same year, often engaging in bilateral exercises, maintenance formations and anti-piracy demonstrations with officials and military personnel of the country visited.

Participation in regional exercises has also been constant. Since 1995, Brazil has joined South African, Argentinean and Uruguayan navies on a biannual basis in the ATLASUR operations.⁴ Moreover, India, Brazil and South Africa have gathered routinely under the IBSAMAR banner with three editions until this point (2008, 2010 and 2012). Similar initiatives within the CPLP framework have also been pursued, with the FELINO exercise comprising the most visible example of Lusophone cooperation in this area. The last of this kind was even organized by the Brazilian Navy itself, on 17-27 September 2013, off the coast of Espírito Santo state. On the other hand, planning is already under way for a joint exercise between Angola, Brazil, the DRC, Namibia and South Africa on African shores, entitled ATLANTIC TIDINGS, and which will be inaugurated in 2015.

Finally, Brazil has also contributed, albeit if discreetly, with a consistent number of observers in a multitude of operations in African shores, organized or led by other third parties. For example, from February 27 to March 1 2012, for the first time ever, two Brazilian Navy officers attended the OBANGAME EXPRESS 2012 exercise, carried out under the US-led African Partnership Station (APS) program. This presence was replicated and augmented in the exercise's 2013 edition, with six Brazilian officers attending the maneuvers on February 19-28. Likewise, Brazilian

⁴ Although ATLASUR exercises first originated in 1993 between South Africa and Argentina, only two years later did Brazil and Uruguay joined in.

observers have also been present in anti-piracy operations off the coast of Somalia, namely with an officer stationed in the General Staff of the European Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) – Operation Alalanta throughout 2012, and well as with another in the command structure of the Combined Task Force-151 (CTF-151), in late 2013.⁵

Defense sector interest in Africa

Based on the original public-owned trio composed by Embraer, Engesa and Avibras, which evolved throughout the years with different rates of success, Brazil's defense sector has come to considerably expand in the last decade, with multiple newcomers trying to vie for the new opportunities made possible by the extensive programs of military reequipping and modernization, initiated during the Lula administration. But besides from reenergizing a dormant sector, fomenting its exporting share also became a priority in order to provide alternative sources of revenue. Unsurprisingly, and together with South American neighbors, Africa figures high in such calculations.

Two examples best reflect this interest. On one hand, the disbursement of Brazil technical assistance in mapping the seabed resources and continental shelf of many of these countries, namely Namibia and Angola, through publicly-owned EMGEPRON, but with negotiations also underway to extend its expertise to Cape Verde and Senegal. On the other hand, the current development of the US\$52 million A-DARTER air-to-air missile, between the Brazilian Air Force and South African Denel Dynamics since 2006, with the participation of Mectron (owned by Odebrecht Defesa & Tecnologia), Opto Eletrônica and Avibras, as the main Brazilian private actors involved.

Overall, even though most of Africa does not possess the economic or technical capacities of South Africa, it is growingly acknowledged that “Brazil can be a great option for Africa and Africa can be a great option for the Brazilian defense industry”.⁶ Especially so, in a context where orders from traditional buyers dwindle in face of the

⁵ CTF-151 is a multinational force, in charge of fighting piracy in the Gulf of Aden and Somalia's coast under a UN mandate, in conjunction with the EU's Operation Atalanta and NATO's Operation Ocean Shield.

⁶ Interview with representative from the *Associação Brasileira das Indústrias de Materiais de Defesa e Segurança* (ABIMDE) – 29/05/2013, São Paulo, Brazil.

recurring contingencies of the international crisis, thus turning the African continent into an increasingly coveted market. Reflecting this rationale, during his trip to Angola and Namibia on February 2013, Celso Amorim took with him representatives of 12 different Brazilian companies, including Embraer, Condor, Avibras, Taurus, EMGEPRON and CBC, interested in increasing businesses and creating joint-ventures, in order to take advantages of the opportunities in these countries. As expressed in interviews for this work, “the political edge in a commercial defense negotiation is extremely important”⁷ and more so, when the time comes to try and enter in such countries. In that sense, Brazil’s diplomatic network and defense attachés stationed in Africa have played a consistent part in fomenting this brewing drive by the private sector.⁸

Challenges ahead

Despite the demonstrated visible ties in this area, Brazilian-African relations are not without its share of obstacles that remain in the way of greater intensity of relations and have prevented or delayed further initiatives from taking place. Although far-reaching, these challenges can be gathered into three main thematic areas:

Legislative-bureaucratic hurdles

This obstacle is particularly visible in the sector where Brazil seemingly took greatest strides, namely in the signing of numerous formal cooperation agreements with African countries. Their ratification process, however, tells a different story. As of 2013, none of the abovementioned agreements had gone through all the necessary formalities and could be considered fully ratified. The only exception concerns Cape Verde, which signed a defense cooperation agreement with Brazil back in 1994 but never got around to ratify it, until 2010. But even then, only in February 2013, did such agreement finally entered into force.

⁷ Interview with representative from EMBRAER – 17/06/2013, Brasília, Brazil.

⁸ Brazil has defense attachés in Angola (with accreditation in São Tomé and Príncipe), Namibia, Nigeria, Mozambique and South Africa, while attachés from Angola, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa are presently stationed in Brasília.

The practical effect of this formal delay, though, is minimal as Angola's case exemplifies. Given the ongoing non-ratification of their overall defense cooperation agreement, both countries authorities went ahead nonetheless and took advantage of Celso Amorim's visit to Luanda on February 2013, to set up a *Comité Interino Conjunto de Defesa* (CICD – Acting Joint Defense Committee) in order to supervise the cooperation actions, through annual meetings in both countries.⁹ Still, and even though Amorim admits that such formal obstacles do not constitute a serious problem, they do complicate budgeting and travelling associated with such activities.¹⁰ Moreover, as reflected in interviews with African officials, they also transmit an image of incoordination and disarray between the legislative and the federal branches of power, which contradicts the over-willingness by Brazilian authorities to sign such kind of agreements in the first place, when they cannot provide assurances that such processes will be dully expedited.

Another hindrance concerns the diffusion of hierarchic supervision regarding the varied set of cooperation initiatives. For example, bearing in mind the apparent harmony of purposes between the Ministry of Defense and ABC for the abovementioned streamlining of training activities of African military personnel, it is worthy noting that not all training opportunities are included in this process. Established programs with Namibia, which remain by far the largest ones until this date, remain under the fold of the Brazilian Navy and are therefore not included in the organizational coordination of ABC. That can be mostly explained by the leadership role that the Brazilian Navy assumed in most of the early cooperation initiatives, in particular with Namibia and South Africa in the nineties, and the weight it still carries in terms of African overtures. But when coupled with a still institutionally-fledgling Ministry of Defense, the multiplicity of centers of decision essentially transmits an apparent lacking of a comprehensive strategy between every single Brazilian actor, engaged in such kind of activities, with corresponding disadvantages in terms of coordination and planning.

Financing

⁹ A similar mechanism was created with South Africa, with the first meeting taking place on March 2013.

¹⁰ Interview with Celso Amorim, Brazilian Defence Minister – 15/05/2013, Brasília, Brazil.

Together with bureaucratic woes, financing issues produce similar counterproductive effects amidst planned cooperation in this area. Taking, yet again, the example of the training activities currently organized by ABC, it should be noted that the numbers presented in Table 5, do not reflect the complete cost of these initiatives for they only cover airfare and accommodation in Brazil. As repeatedly underscored in interviews, the real cost of formation is never accounted for given that it does not include the actual worth of the position made available at Brazilian military institutions. Moreover, given the lack of a comprehensive legal basis for ABC's activities, funding for this kind of activities has to be channeled through cooperation programs previously agreed with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), which makes overall accountability exercises even more difficult to achieve. To be sure, this is a problem that affects the entire spectrum of Brazilian cooperation aid efforts but it does hamper efforts to provide a more comprehensive approach in such an area.

A second point can be raised regarding the role of the BNDES in the promotion of greater opportunities for Brazilian defense industry in Africa, both in terms of under-lacking and overdependence. Until this date, every major defense deal with Africa has received the support of BNDES. Angola's purchase of its Super Tucanos was only made possible after a US\$ 300 million credit loan given out by BNDES for that same purpose. Likewise, Senegal received the same kind of coverage when it signed its deal in 2013 for Super Tucanos and patrol vessels. But a recurrent complaint amongst the defense sector is precisely the need to further increase and facilitate new credit lines, in order to allow more complex deals to take place, in destinations usually not covered by regular financing schemes and labeled as of considerable risk. Hence, the calls for BNDES to play an even greater role in these processes and more so when in competition with other no-strings attached funding made possible by alternative competitors. However, this also comes with an added dose of uncertainty for it tampers with BNDES's own mandate and exposes its operations to countries that are often considered risky for a set of reasons, namely recurrent political instability and internal unrest. The balancing act between such dual positioning is therefore of the essence.

A different set of reasons for the difficulty in expanding such kind of cooperation with African countries lies with the nature of Africa's shortcomings in this area. For example, one of the main reasons pointed out for countries like Nigeria and Senegal to not fill out all the vacancies in Brazilian military institutions made at their disposal in recent years, deals with the issue of language. Given that every single course is taught in Portuguese, military personnel from these countries is stuck with the rather easy option of choosing between Brazil and, for example, France, where they are offered the same kind of opportunities, in their mother tongue.¹¹ Hence, Brazil's goal of expanding these training programs, especially with Western African countries, can get sidetracked by such contingencies.

A similar case of disconnection with African realities concerns the supposed sale of a class-*Barroso* corvette to Equatorial Guinea in 2010. Even though agreements were signed and promises were exchanged, the deal never concretized and was later abandoned. Explanations abound for this episode, from the insistence of President Teodoro Obiang on the *Barroso* when he visited Brazil in 2008 to the voluntarism of President Lula da Silva when he travelled to Equatorial Guinea,¹² but ultimately the fact remained: such vessel was ill-appropriated for the concrete needs of Equatorial Guinea's diminished Navy, which instead required smaller vessels and not 2400 tones corvettes, with a price-tag of US\$ 500 million. In these cases, adjusting the offer to the recipient country's actual requirements can be crucial in order to concretize any deal of such magnitude.

Understanding the specifics of Africa's own needs, on the other hand, also implies dealing with other potential suitors, who vie for every opportunity that surface in this domain. China, in particular, is now seen as an alternative to Namibia, other than Brazil, after it sold a new naval logistical support vessel, the NS Elephant, together with two harbor patrol vessels, in 2012.¹³ Underscored in this deal was a hard truth to Brazil, namely that the existence of a fruitful 19-years bilateral partnership does not equate to exclusivity or preference when the time comes to build up a

¹¹ Interview with African defense attaché – 22/04/2013, Brasília, Brazil.

¹² Lula's visit to Equatorial Guinea on July 5th 2010 was scheduled to coincide with the *Barroso's* maiden trip to Africa, which also included a stopover in Malabo. Not coincidentally, the declaration of intent to purchase such kind of vessel was signed the next day.

¹³ As if in a token of irony, they arrived just in time to replace former Brazilian corvette *Purus/Lt. General Dimo Hamaambo*, which was decommissioned shortly thereafter.

country's navy capacities. In that sense, and despite the confidence expressed by Brazilian authorities that the drawbacks of Chinese technology will turn out counterproductive for their intended reach in Africa in the long run, Brazil faces an inevitable stiff competition when looking for new markets in the continent for its defense portfolio.

Conclusion

Frequent attempts to grasp the substance behind the agendas of several emerging powers are often met with considerable challenges. Whether because the multitude of interests at play easily overlap or because most of the instruments adopted intersect, making sense of all the different efforts, investments and initiatives carried out in the world stages and trying to find a common thread among all of them can thus become a cumbersome task. But as Nel point out, "once one fully recognizes the agency of these states, and begins to appreciate how they perceive the world and their own role in it, it becomes easier to identify both continuities and discontinuities in the unfinished struggles of the developing world" (2010, 952). More importantly, once one recognizes the full motivations behind the actions of said agency, it becomes more perceptible how the complex geopolitical puzzles that many of these countries chose to embark on, actually come together in a cohesive and sustained manner over the years.

In this case, this paper sought to bring to the forefront of the debate over Brazilian-African relations a topic previously overlooked or never fully accounted for, while depicting it in its most important dimensions. Even though it is clear the emphasis on African countries bordering the South Atlantic, overtures towards other parts of the continent cannot be so easily dismissed. Whether it concerns the strength of relations with Mozambique, the monitoring of the anti-piracy operations off the coast of Somalia or the interest by Brazilian defense companies in multiple markets in the overall continent, it is possible to ascertain that Africa as a whole attracted sufficient interest in this domain from Brazilian policymakers. Moreover, by identifying the main complications in the way of said cooperation initiatives, this exercise aimed to expand the discussion on the issue and assess its current state of

execution, thus attracting more focus to an area deemed as a priority but still lacking any kind of holistic approach.

Ultimately, though, what ends up underscored is the existence of a far more materialistic and strategically-driven agenda from Brazil towards Africa than what has been publically transmitted until this point. As long as security risks and defense concerns with transatlantic ramifications continue to arise alongside or within the African continent, it can only be expected Brazil to maintain its interest and increase its engagement in this area with such countries. Hence, acknowledging that Brazilian security and defense concerns require and imply an active and increased cooperation with African partners, in terms of developing their local capabilities to adequately control and protect their own territories and resources so that Brazil's security is correspondingly assured, is to undoubtedly understand Brazilian-African relations in a more wholesome and complete fashion.

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